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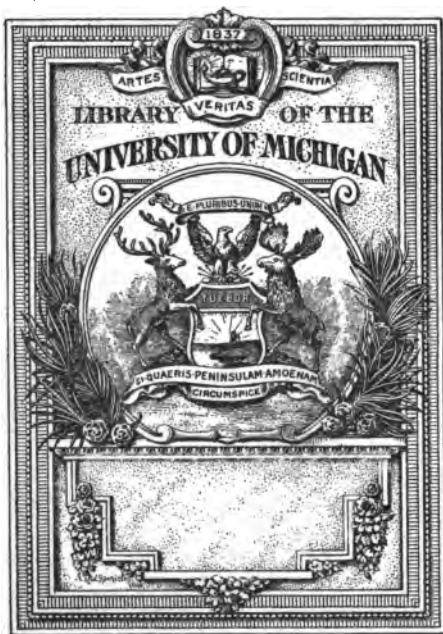
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POEMS

P O E M S

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BY

A. BERNARD MIALL

*JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD,
LONDON AND NEW YORK*

1899

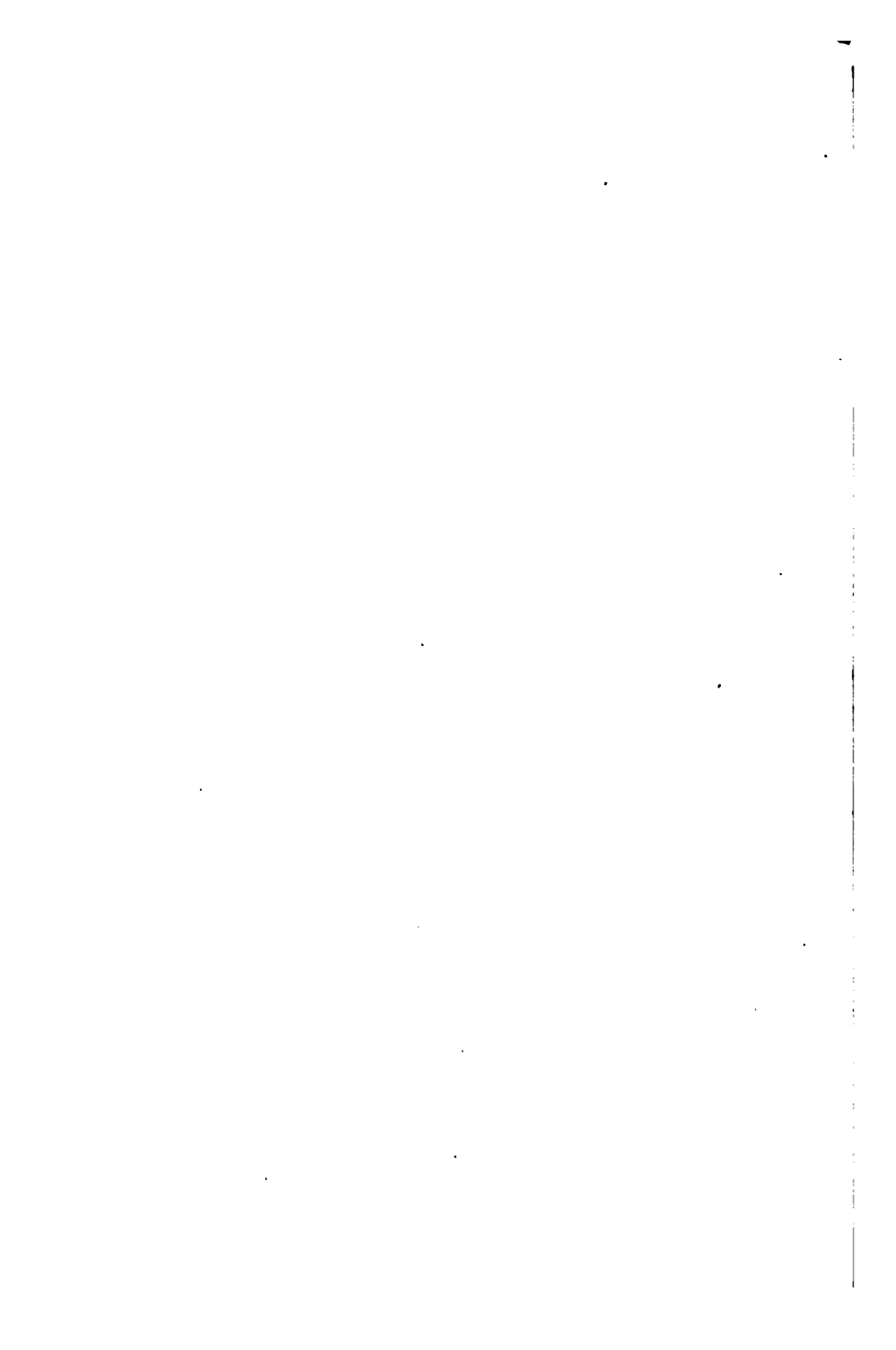


TO
W. HUGH CHESSON

Dittisham, Oct. 22, 1898.



Many of these verses have appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and in the *Westminster Gazette and Budget*; some in the *Speaker*, one in the *Yellow Book*, and one in the *New Saturday*, a paper since defunct. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my thanks to the editors of these journals.



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BOOK I

P O E M S

THE ROSE WITH FOUR PETALS

THIS life is in the likeness of a rose
Having four petals and a heart of fire ;
The petals that the wind eternal blows
Are hope and memory, wisdom and desire.

One petal holds the mingled love and fear
And imminence of all unknown, to be ;
The life that goes to death from year to year,
The lands desired by eyes that cannot see.

One petal holds the wisdom of dead things,
Dead loves, dead hates, regrets that cannot die,
The dust of slain desires with broken wings,
The splendour of deciduous joys gone by.

The Rose with Four Petals

And one, nepenthe for what might have been,
The bitterness, the sad imagined sweet,
Grown dim for sick desires that throng between,
The land of wandering lusts with weary feet.

One holds the secret of all holy things
Breathed faintly where the mountain lands are
steep,
In one eternal harmony, that sings
To all except the dead, and men that sleep.

This flower is in the likeness of a cross
That man is bound upon till he expire.
One arm, in sorrow of eternal loss,
Points to the failing of the sunset fire.

One arm is pointed to the Eastern night
That sends no herald of its coming years
Save the thick darkness of its ultimate might,
The veil and limit of its hopes and fears.

The stem is rooted in the silent earth ;
All things that sleep, undreaming, lie therein ;
All things that wait, yet may not come to birth ;
The seed of holiness, the honey of sin.

The Sea of Death

The stem points up to the ethereal deep
Where drift the indifferent stars across our
sight,
Where, in the austere skies that know not sleep,
The wind creeps thro' the awful peace of
night.

This Rose of Life shall live its meed of days
Till the eternal wind that pitiless blows
Sweep the four petals down its infinite ways,
Leaving the heart and fruitage of the rose.

THE SEA OF DEATH

HERE, at the eastern limit of the land
Fulfilled of night, and the elusive haze,
Golden, of plain-girt cities, the silent cliff
Fronts the blue void of immemorial dawn.

How long have I beheld the equal sky,
Forecasting with expectant heart increase
Of brighter azure, or the warmer flush
Of dawn the insistent herald—how long fled
From all discomfortable ways of men,

The Sea of Death

Harsh night of cities, cast about with lights
Of gold extinguishing the foam of stars,
Harsh voices and harsh footfalls, banishing
The holy silence of the gracious dark,
Warm radiance of dwellings, casting forth
The fearful silence of the drifting stars,
The questioning stillness of the infinite skies,
The call to quest in the enticing night ?

Long have I lain, thro' years oblivious
Of all the backward lands, all ways of men,
High on the verge of this precipitous cliff,
Above the silence of the blood-red sea
Where the white bodies float for evermore ;
Nor to expectance of mine inward heart
Has form of cloud or dim increase of light
Moved in the twilight heavens of the east,
Nor the wind blown, nor any voice of man
Or wheeling seafowl ever come : no sound,
Save the swift crepitant start of stones that fall
From agelong rest, and with small sullen plunge
Divide the silence of the sea of blood,
That from the cliff out to the utter verge
Where the blue heavens are founded on the sea,
By stir of wind or wave untroubled lies,

The Sea of Death

Nor any wind wakes in the space between.

But on the silence of the blood-red sea
The naked and white bodies wake in death,
Ascend the dimness of the middle air,
And hang before me in the blue of night:
Thereof are faces frozen with all fear,
Whose tears suffuse the whiteness of their flesh,
Flesh whitened past the awful hue of death,
Mouths writhen past the pain of mortal men ;
White bodies too of women, whose long hair
Hangs heavy and thick with dropping forth of
blood,

Continual, dripping in the sea beneath ;
Therewith are faces blind with mocking eyes,
And lips of awful warning, muttering
Horror unspeakable in speech unheard ;
Therewith are brows blest with an infinite peace,
A solace and a quiet ineffable.

White hang the bodies over the red sea,
Beneath the blue seas of the upper air,
White, but in death awakened, horrible,
With lips that shriek not, and blind eyes of
death,

And hair down-dripping to the sinister sea.

Yet, when above the backward lands of men

The Sea of Death

Slumber and silence gain a passing hold,
When the skies darken, nor reverberate
The flash of myriad lights, nor bruit of life,
Far in the eastern lands of dawn withheld
Looms a still figure, slowly quickening
Like dawn to full perfection beautiful ;
At whose advent, as one whose life is done
Sinks with last breath upon his latest bed,
Sink the white bodies as one dying man,
The middle air vacating that they held,
Relapse, and float upon the sea of blood.

In the eastern blue, remote, more beautiful
Than dawn or dreams or love in any land,
She, in dark radiance waxing, reigns supreme,
Her white feet gleaming on the ultimate sea,
Her brows dividing the high home of stars.
As one beloved in dreams, and far more fair,
She stands, girt round with violet garniture
More soft and strange than is the blue of night,
Whose dimness is more kind within her eyes ;
Fair raiment cast about her fairer limbs,
Whose perfect whiteness yet is white therethro',
Like foam of twilit seas on windy waves ;
And her white arms flash in the holy sky,
White hands put by the shadow of the hair

The Sea of Death

Fallen across her brows imperial
And eyes of awful quiet, shining forth
Beholding only silence and the night.
Whereat, beholding those white brows of hers,
Than life more glad and more serene than sleep,
Beholding her immortal lips whereon
Love hangs divided with a pitying scorn,
And mournful pride with graciousness, my heart
Yearns to the white perfection of her breast,
Shaking my body with hard hopeless blows,
Like a thick silver fish caught among nets,
To leave my body and go forth to her ;
My lips too yearn to taste the quietness
Of her hair's shadowy downfall, and my veins,
Like lovers aching to caress her own,
Strain with harsh longing through my inner
flesh.

But she, who, standing grave, inscrutable,
Beyond the world, dim in dim outer space,
Waits far beyond the passionate voice of men,
Scorns them that love her with a sweet, calm
pride,
And is not kind to worship. Yet my heart
Leaps with thick pain and sullen blows, as tho'
To force my body to the extreme verge,

The Sea of Death

And hurl me downward in the sea of blood,
So the slow drift of that corpse-laden tide
Might carry forth my load of extreme love,
To leave me at her gracious feet, on shores
Unseen, unknown, undreamed of : yet I know—
O heart, be told thereof, persuaded quite,
And no more fallen in passion!—that her feet
Are not on any sea, nor any shore,
But are established in the waste of night,
Space unattainable. But now my hands,
The cliff being shorn by gradual decay
Affording for my elbows no more rest,
Heavily hang before my wearied eyes,
Heavy with blood in every vein surcharged,
And wet with blood about the blackened nails.
Then my pained eyes behold red sea alone;
Therein no stars are mirrored, no pale star,
Nor faint blue flush of the enclosing skies,
Nor broken nor still image of her form,
Who stands beyond the verge, inscrutable :
Only the bodies float with arms outheld,
Rigid and white and writhen, cruciform,
With eyes that see not questioning the sky ;
Also the frail red poppies jutting forth
From the cliff's face of white, quiver and writhe

The Sea of Death

To the distempered riot of my blood,
Like little dusky flames that have no heat,
And stones released fall turning in the sea,
And are engulfed by a red shuddering mouth
That opens, and is not. O, I am fain
To fall, with such a plunge and tide of blood
As by expectance or long fear, my heart
Knows, to be one among the bounden dead,
To know no more desiring or despair,
But that dumb fear takes hold on me, whose
might

Grips at my heart when out of sullen sea
Rise the white faces, vacuous and blind,
Or writhen with a fear unspeakable,
Yet some are covered with an extreme peace ;
But which of them I were I know not now,
Nor anything but fear ; for which these hands
Grove in the short hard grasses of the verge,
To pluck my body backward, till mine eyes
Behold the brow and eyes of my desire.
Thereto, as though before my questioning
And perfect worship softened, those grave lips
Are stirred in quiet speech, that falls upon
Mine ears long sick with silence, as a dream
On men of dreamless slumber wearied out :

BOOK I

The Crucified

For roses wither, and the kindly earth
Receives their petals as the snow-soft ewe
Her trembling young ; or maidens gather them,
To shed some treasured sweetness of old scent ;
The grape is trodden under dancing feet,
And thereof cometh wine ; the seething corn
Falls, and is pleasant bread ; the night is born
Because the sunset lessens from the sky,
And happy memories follow happiness,
And weariness grows peace ; yea, all these things
Being born to die, in dying are fulfilled,
For they have seed, for they are born in death ;
And it is good ; but pain shall never die,
That is a barren stem without a flower,
That has no fruit, but is already crowned.

The dead sleep on for ever ; on their eyes
Lies a great weariness, because their eyes
Never shall see ; their lips, that shall not speak,
Are hopeless ; and their hands, that long ago
Strove with the nails in agony, are still,
And have no strength, for they shall strive no
more.

Over their bodies lies the weariness
Of all that shall not be : for these have been.

The Crucified

The flowers that were their hearts are fall'n to
dust,

Blossom and evil weed and delicate flower,
And at their birth their tears and laughter died.
The winds have lost the echoes of their songs,
And all their ancient wisdom is as dust ;
Only, around their brows, the crown of thorns,
Only the nails immoveable through their limbs,
Only the cross, the circumstance of pain,
That lives, and has no power to harm the dead
That shall not dream, nor wake ; who are wrapped
in rest

And shall not wake to know it ; who rest not.
They have forgotten all, and all their joy
Is dead, and all their pain unsolaced yet
Is no more pain ; but ah ! their endless rest
Is no repose for these : there are none such.

The flowers that were their hearts have fall'n to
dust,

And the good seed has flourished, and the earth
Is fragrant with the fairness of their hearts,
And shadowed by the coolness of their dreams.
Therefore, when we are glad of any spring,
Or any delicate flower or soft song,

The Crucified

Shall we not say : *Remember now their sleep,*
Think of the silent ones whose voices now
Are heard ; they taught us to call fairness fair,
And all the wonder of the earth is theirs.

Yea, roses fall, and thereof roses spring,
And all their gladness laughs until to-day ;
Only the cross decays, only the nails
Are rusted to the core : only the crown
Of thorns is a dead thing and out of mind
For us : and yet these things shall never change.

O vanity of living and of death !
Their pain is dead, it is clean out of mind,
They are forgotten, and their gladness lives,
And sweeps away behind them with the years.

O happiness of living and of death !
All pain shall die, for this has of itself
No life, being evil ; and at length shall die.
Only the roses of our rose-gardens
Shall gladden days that are not, that shall be
Made shadowy with the sweetness of their
dreams
And ours ; and theirs shall mingle with our own,
And these be one, and we be one with them.

The Watcher

THE WATCHER

HIGH in the silence of embattled towers,
When night held all the heavens and wet
earth,

She stood, awaiting the faint flower of day
In pure chill eastern heavens, where remote
Light waxed austere through some expectant
while,

Till the grey river of dawn above the hills
Drew on a soft similitude of flame
And rose to utter radiance, and the sun
Struck on the towers, and those expectant lips.
Then she that waited, leaning to the east,
Held her tired mouth forth to the paling sun,
Whose fresh light lived among her fallen hair,
And laved her throat and bosom and pure brows
With softness of sweet colour ; and the day
Woke shortly at the coming of the sun.
From all wide hills and leafy valley roads,
After the birds had sung a little while
To the wet earth yet sleeping, flowed the bruit
Of men fast journeying ; the wind of the day
Wafted a murmur and clatter of many hooves
Up to that watcher in the silent towers ;

The Watcher

With sound of singing in the distant ways,
And sound of laughter on the awakened hills,
But yet no song was as the song she knew.
Men brake out of all woodland ways, and high
On shadowy hills came darkly from the sun,
And made the morning flash with burning steel,
All the hot forenoon journeying by the tower,
Whereon she watching heard the laugh and song
And graver speech rise mingled ; till her heart
Grew sick and laboured at the approach of noon,
For no way came the banner that she knew,
Also among brown faces on the road
That face she loved, set with expectant mien,
That face her heart ached after, and her eyes,
Was not discerned in all the indifferent throng.
Also the odour of hot summer grass,
The kindly breath of the hill-scented wind,
And flowerful perfume of the cooler ways,
Mocked her with perfect incense ; till the noon
Struck, and upon the first note of the bell
Her heart smote thickly on her tender side
And stayed her hearing with hard muffled blows ;
For then no foot fell on the castle steps,
Though all wide gates lay open ; and the square
Of shadow where the stairway entered up

The Watcher

Gave up no sound at all, no sight but black.
Thereat at noon she turned her weeping face
Toward the west, and watched with hopeless eyes
The silent fields that journeyed to the west,
The golden lands of the departing sun.
All afternoon, by white and cloudy ways,
Men hurried westward, bowed in driven dust,
Shrinking in drifting smoke, and when the sun
Slowly and with intolerable light
Pained the near heavens till their life ran out
In fiery death along the level earth,
Clouds hurried from the backward east, and
 wind,
Sending a herald of confused sound,
Smote on the towers, and, shrieking toward the
 west,
Rapt the shrill moan of desolated woods
And bore it forth in greyness; and the day
Was drowned in rain, and night came down the
 wind.
Then she that watched, with blown hair rained
 upon
And garments pressed against her by the wind,
Cast forth her arms helpless along the walls,
And sank to kneeling and most bitter tears,

The Fortunate Islands

Hiding her face from the grey rustling rain.
Majestic clouds, borne on the urgent air,
Brought up the night within their nets of rain,
And darkness darkness overtook. The night
Was fallen as if day had never been,
And she, forsaken, abandoned to the rain,
Covered her eyes, or lifted up her face
To gaze into the roaring wet abyss
When the sun vanished, when the day went by,
Nor turned her to the east, whereto the sun
Was bounden with his majesties of gold,
And the unwelcome and incredible day.

THE FORTUNATE ISLANDS

WHEN flushed as a rose's petal the moon
floats low in the east,
In a lavender twilight falling, refreshed the
birds awake,
Stirring the heart of the silence as night airs
trouble the lake
That all the day long lay dreaming, now that
the heat has ceased,

The Fortunate Islands

I am sick for a fortunate land, be it west that it
lie or east,
Where life is a lovely thing to possess for its
own fair sake.

I am sick for the dim sweet isle girt round with
a rainy sea
Mingled of many colours, flashing or windy or
white,
Or still as the face of the maiden you love at
the fall of night,
The fortunate far-off isle where the blest un-
dying be,
But I think no sail ever sailed or shone on the
changing sea,
Tho' the sound thereof and the savour shadow
me day and night.

But here in the passage of seasons, the watching
of infinite seas,
We have seen or have dreamed we beheld the
islands that know not of change ;
Crowned with their shadowy trees, past over the
seas that range,

The Fortunate Islands

And girded about with a drowsy mist and a
golden ease,
Made sweet with the odour of hot thick flowers
and the drone of bees,
The islands unchanging endure in the stress of
the seas that change.

Ah, there in the light of the moon, in the islands
of all desired,
The days that are dead are possessed, and the
days that never will be,
In the islands at rest like a sleep on the breast
of the tranquil sea,
Like a kiss upon shadowy eyes, as a dream falls
down on the tired,
The islands of all things dead and the haven of
all desired,
Where the dead would ever have been, where
ever the weary would be.

All the day long there the sunlight, deep in the
green deep ways,
Lies with the strenuous silence of one not tired,
but at peace,

The Fortunate Islands

And ceases at length as kisses content of their
answer cease ;

There for delight of the day none numbers the
passage of days,

None of the folk that wend in the windless whis-
pering ways,

Till the stars awake in a dream, till the dream
of their waking cease.

For a magical slumber is woven of music of
winds breathed o'er

The sigh of the trees abandoned no wind of the
day has fanned,

And the coolness of odorous dew shed over the
charméd land,

And the langourous ripple of waves awake on
a drowséd shore,

While the stars shake low in the sea till the
hush of the night is o'er,

Till as fair a day as another tread over them
toward the land.

And these need hardly remember, they need not
to hope at all,

For the dawn of their skies is the birth of a life
enduring the day,

The Fortunate Islands

And whether the sun shall set or endure they
shall hardly say,

And the darkness is only peace refashioned
about dewfall ;

They reject not the perfect hour at hand for the
hunger of all,

The day is utterly theirs, and theirs is the happier
way.

O slender and white and supple, O heavy and
sweet of hair,

With the floating purple of dreams and desire
for your garniture,

Were ever your loves less lovely, being for ever
sure,

Your days less desirable ever, being for ever
fair ?

Is the end attained of desire less dear than
desiring there,

Less fair than a last forgetting the knowledge
that lives endure ?

There do ye weary of pleasure complete, or con-
ceive a desire

For a thing unknown, untasted, for days that
tarry or cease ?

The Fortunate Islands

Shall a twilight ever untroubled fail of familiar
peace,
Or the sun by unfailing splendour veil or decrease his fire?
Nay, have ye hearkened, as we, to the voice of
a last desire
For the coast of an ultimate island, a stillness of
infinite peace?

We have dreamed that at fall of the dew down-
shed in your shrouded land
Your most quiet hands and happy forth-holding
as languidly
Your tresses lift in the coolness, ye gaze apart
to the sea,
Mournful indeed for us, who know not if we
understand,
But I know no sail ever sailed or shone by the
fortunate land,
Not one of all songs ever lost on the water
strayed over the sea.

The Message of Nature

THE MESSAGE OF NATURE

I CAME to thee enraptured, and I found
Thy wind swift laughter and thy sun a
smile,

And all thy thick trees amorous of the air ;
Even the old leaves rain-rotten on the ground
Had but to wait a short appointed while
Again to be alive in thee and fair.

I came to thee in anguish, and I found
Thy wind a lament full of all affright,
Thy desolated woods a stricken race ;
And all of thee was born to die : the ground
Conceived and thrust doomed things into the
light,
And flaunted death in every living face.

I came to thee with neither joy nor grief,
Too wise to hope, too stubborn to despair ;
I found thee vacant as my own soul was.
Void of significance flapped every leaf,
Wind was a mere dull passage of dead air,
And hills were heaps of earth o'errun with grass.

The Mirror and the Veil

THE MIRROR AND THE VEIL

TO the holy place of the forest
Laughing I went :
Over the heart of Nature
Laughing I bent,
To see what she hid there,
But in the happy place
All that was reflected
Was my laughing face.

To the strong heart of the forest
Weeping I went,
To find of Nature
The secret of her content ;
Low in the mournful pool
In that despairing place
All I saw reflected
Was my weeping face.

Neither weeping nor laughing,
With neither hope nor despair,
Forth I went to the forest
To seek a solace there ;

The Recluse

Dead lay the water
I was gazing on ;
My face looked up with neither hate
Nor love thereon.

Of renunciation
I took the shadowy veil ;
I bound it over my face
And I knew that I should not fail ;
Down I saw thro' the waters,
Down to the secret deep,
Where the soul of Nature broodeth,
The wisdom that knows not sleep.

THE RECLUSE

I WAS impatient of the wrestling seas :
My heart shall be a valley calm, I said,
Where salt vexed waters enter to become
A mirror to the stars that every breeze
Bade them forget : where ever overhead
The woods that overhang the woods are dumb.

The Recluse

But gazing on the tide with fond desire
Where the gold glories of the sun were hung,
My heart reluctant strove to hold it back,
The flood confounding with the heaven's fire,
Bars I put forth, with rushes green I clung,
Thick ranks of weed and beds of sullen wrack.

So thus it was, that at my river's mouth
The keen bright brine exhausted o'er the bar
Ran slack and halted : pool on stagnant pool
Now lies that river choked upon the south
No tides may cleanse, where never hang the
stars,
Whose feverous valley never wind may cool.

So thus it is, the slow long-pulséd hours
Pass with no keeper but a swooning breath
Of sun-sick waters, and the river lies
Choked with hot weeds, dry reeds and rotting
flowers,
Foul scurf of salt and fetid flats of death,
And shows no recognition of the skies.

The Shy Thoughts

THE SHY THOUGHTS

IN the garden of your mind
All the thoughts that have no voice
Shiver softly in the wind,
Brooding with a gentle noise,
Watching you with wary eyes,
Gorgeous birds of Paradise :
Argent-eyed and of soft feather,
Coloured with all hues together
Of flowers that open in twilight weather
On an olden tapestry :
He that walks the garden ways
Seeth every bird that sways
Dimly sidelong from his eye :
But if he turn,
With beating heart,
To mark the magic birds with hues that pulse
and burn,—
Ah ! with a start
The charm goes by !—
They rise on rustling frightened wings that but
obscure the sky.

In Vino Veritas

IN VINO VERITAS

IN the old house, I heard them say,
A hoard of gold was hid away :
I set the mouldered house afire.
The flames red-rustled all the day ;
At eve, in fuming ashes grey,
I sought and found my heart's desire.

They said there was a healing well
In the old garden ; none could tell,
The weeds were woven and wound so rank.
In flame the last leaf writhed and fell,
The last wet stem crackled its knell :
I found the healing well, and drank.

A truth of old I could not find,
Forgotten in a careful mind,
Altho' familiar to my youth ;
I drank red wine ; the world as wind
Whirled, and my eyes no more were blind :
In the thick dark outshone the truth.

Beauty

BEAUTY

WHERE is the Lady Beauty? She is not
Dead or grown old, tho' few may find
her now.

Still, in remoteness, with a patient brow,
She waits among the hills, in what fair spot
Those know that worship her, they love that bow,
His is her house that grows a worshipper,
She is not fled; we have forgotten her.
She waits for us; 'tis we that have forgot.

Till men shall hunger for her perfect face,
Shall make of her demesne their dwelling-place,
She waits, her face fanned by the eternal wind:
Till men shall flee to her for love or fear,
For her dear sake hold one another dear,
And, in her service, shall become her kind.

THE WINDS OF THE CROSSWAYS

WHERE the moon lies low in the lake
And the stars are mirrored white
The blind white faces
Arise in another birth;

The Winds of the Crossways

They are gathered, they fear and awake,
They are borne on the shadow of night,
From the far waste places,
The desolate ends of the earth;
And another thing I hear
Than the hiss of the reeds and heath,
For a voice is awake in the south
In a song of a pleasant fire;
Thro' the lands fulfilled of fear
And delight, and the odour of death,
The words of a passionate mouth
Are borne on the wind of desire.

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy
hair fall,*

*For I would not see the faces, I would not hear the
call.*

The wide skies are woven
Of purple and gold in the west;
They are covered of face and grey
That walk in the splendid light,
Where bright ways are cloven
In clouds that are dark with rest;
They are wise in the wisdom of day,
They are worn in the fever of night,

The Winds of the Crossways

Ah, which of them all rejoices,
That were, or that have not been?
They are clad in the glory of kings,
They are filled with words unsaid ;
The softest song of their voices
Is broken with tears between
In the country of outworn things,
In the ways of the unborn dead.
*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy
hair fall,*
*For I would not see their faces, I would not hear them
call.*

By the shores of the freshening dawn
Is a falling of golden light
Shed over the faces
That watch for the quickening sun ;
And these are bitter and drawn
With dread of the ultimate night,
And the desolate paths and places
To tread ere the day be done :
But these are glad and aglow
For the smiting of many lyres
And the tumult of imminent feet
That approach in the van of the day :

The Winds of the Crossways

But what if the daybreak grow
To the glimmer of sullen fires,
And the songs be no more sweet,
And the singers pass away ?

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy
hair fall,
For I would not see their faces, I would not hear them
call.*

In the high cold ways
Of the listening mountain lands,
Where fields of a virgin snow
Endure in the sun's embrace,
Thro' passing of sterile days
Those tarry with quiet hands,
That we dared of old to know,
To speak with them, face to face ;
In the ways too steep and chill
For men that are weary or weep
They dream, and they come not forth,
They dream, and themselves behold ;
When the voice of the south is still
From the hills that may never sleep
The wind bears out of the north
Their songs austere and cold.

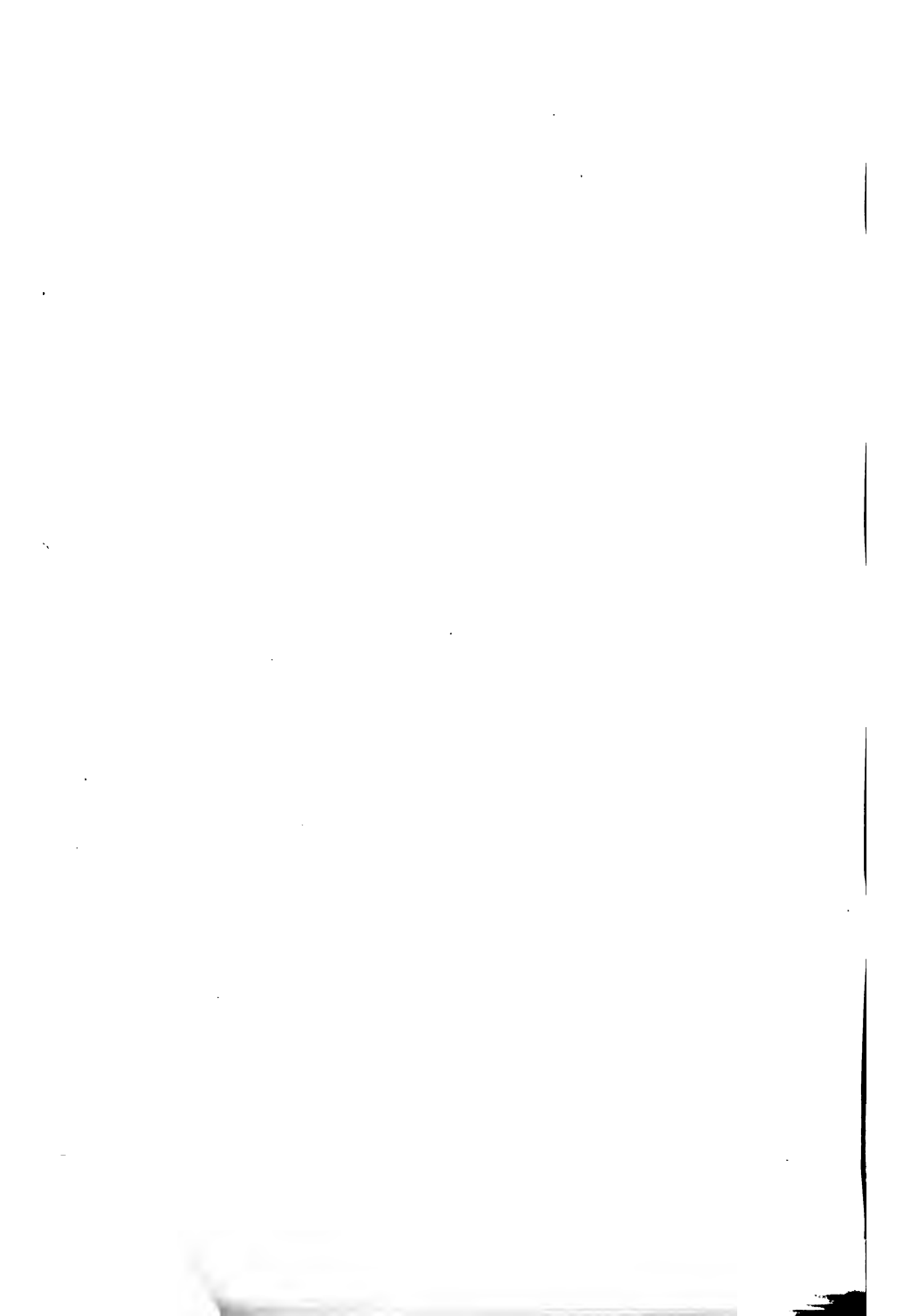
The Winds of the Crossways

*O love, let your hands go about my head, your heavy
hair fall,
For I cannot see their faces, I dare not hear them call.*

At the crossways four we are born :
Shall we weary or wander away
To be lost in a still desire,
In passion, or vain regret,
Or in barren hopes and forlorn ?
Let us live in the passing day,
That it bring with the morning fire
Life, till the sun be set.
I would live in the passing day :
Ah, make it suffice to me !
Be the winds' wings waking or furled,
Be they weary or cruel or kind,
Let us tarry where way meets way
That the winds of the ways may be
Only the winds of the world,
And the roses we of the wind.

*Ah love ! let your hands go about my head, your heavy
hair fall,
Till I hear your quiet breathing, and hear nought else
at all.*

BOOK II



THE DEMAND

BE near me, near me always, my Delight !
I must have joy complete, or none :
I am not happy by you, day or night,
For thought how soon my happy hour is done !
For other hearts are other joys ; for me,
Have I one comfort, save with you to be ?
Not one, not one !

e near me always ! For in vainly trying
To find some little ease away,
I, being young, do sudden fall a-crying
“ How glad a thought ! ” or “ Ah, how kind a
day ! ”
And turn with happy laughter, so to share
My joy—with whom ? Ah, one who is not there !
Be not away !

The Challenge

THE CHALLENGE

SO wholly fair are you,
That you are far too fair.
Be to your beauty true,
Lest I despair.

For if I find a flower
When winter dawns are late,
Or live a perfect hour
In years that are desolate,
Or tread a quiet path by men untrod,
Girded by troubled ways of men around,
Are not these perfect things a meting-rod,
That all is measured by and wanting found?
Be true, O sweet, be true,
For all, because of you,
Is weighed and wanting found.

Be not so fair, sweet eyes,
Or, heart, be fairer far,
O eyes that put her heart to shame,
That her heart's ways no fairer are,
Be not so fair, or, being fair, be thou, O heart,
the same.

Blanche

BLANCHE

GOD did not make her very wise,
But carved a strangeness round her mouth ;
He put her great sorrow in her eyes,
And softness for men's souls in drouth,
And on her face, for all to see,
The seal of awful tragedy.

God did not make her very fair,
But white and lithe and strange and sweet ;
A subtle fragrance in her hair,
A slender swiftness in her feet,
And in her hands a slow caress :
God made these for my steadfastness.

God did not give to her a heart,
But there is that within her face
To make men long to muse apart
Until they goodness find and grace,
And think to read and worship there
All good : yet she is scarcely fair.

The Burden of Pity

THE BURDEN OF PITY

WALK straitly in your ways, O sweet,
I said, for pity of my love.

There was one pathway for your feet,
One valley in cool hills above,
A way that I found out for you
In dreams, because my love was true.

Belovéd, will you think that God
In His own shape had fashioned man,
And watched the path His creature trod
That ended foul, that fair began,
With great love, though His eyes were dim
With pity: could you weep for Him?

But I a perfect image wrought
Of all I would have had you be,
In likeness of my holiest thought;
You have grown less than this to me,
And I more pitiful than God,
Knowing the way you should have trod.

Yet I will hold your heart as pure
As I have wished it every day,
And name your faults the signature
Of pains that came and passed away;

Forget

And I will love you more, my sweet,
For every wound on your white feet.

And every stain shall be a mouth
To sing of what you should have grown
If winds blew ever from the South,
If you had never been alone.
My love, that came too late to aid,
For pity shall be threefold made.

Yet O, wild rose the wind has flawed,
But else more fair than all your kind,
O snowflake on white eyelids thawed
To leave a falling tear behind,
O wherefore are you not complete,
Or, being ruined, wherefore sweet?

FORGET

FORGET the silent river and the lights of
gold,
Forget the dusty trees and the haunted, slum-
bering town.

Forget

And, O poor heart, remember the starlight on
the fold

Where the sheep lay a-sleeping and the dew
fell down.

Forget the weary morrow and the day gone by,
And remember how the daybreak flowers
above the sea

Where of old I heard the waters and the pee-
wit's cry,

Half waking, half asleep, where I fain would
be.

Forget, forget that in the town behind

Your first love lies awake, or is weeping yet ;
Dream that once in wandering in the twilight
and the wind

You met her far away, or dream we never
met.

Forget, forget that she is near and weeping,

Dream that we are hearkening the foam of
the sea,

Lying in the grass where the wind is creeping,

Singing a low song to my tired love and me.

A Commonplace Tragedy

Dream her lips are soft with happy laughter,
Dream her eyes are dim with happy tears,
Dream, O dream no waking follows after,
Dream beyond the limit and control of years.

Sleep, O sleep, forget you ever met her ;
Sweet it were to dream in sleep were she at
rest ;
Heart that cannot comfort her or yet forget her,
Be utterly at peace ; oh, this were best.

A COMMONPLACE TRAGEDY

BECAUSE I found you full of care
I gave my happy heart,
And after bore an equal share,
Perchance the greater part.

There was no use in this, I know,
Tho' all that I could do,
For none the happier did you grow,
But I grew sad as you.

The Strand

Because no lighter grew your lot,
No comfort could I see :
So dull a heart you wanted not,
And gave it back to me.

It was too sad to bear alone ;
What should I find to do
With my poor heart so heavy grown
But bring it back to you ?

THE STRAND

THE wet wind wanders o'er the street ;
Along the pavements wet,
Above, below the shuffling feet,
The yellow lamps are set.

Dusk in the reaches of the sky,
Dusk in the quieter ways,
And as I pass the theatres by
A golden dusk of haze.

The Strand

Onward, on the faces go,
On the unflagging feet ;
No face among them all I know,
No step for me to greet.

I saw two lovers meet and kiss,
A lamp was bright above ;
Her lips were like the lips I miss,
Your lips, O girl I love.

I saw two lovers turn away
And leave the rumbling Strand ;
As you and I on many a day,
I saw them hand in hand.

Hand in hand as we, my dear,
As we shall never go ;
Along the alley cold and drear
I heard them laughing low.

I had your heart—but now, but now,
I would not ask so much ;
But yet, to kiss your quiet brow,
And O, to feel your touch.

The Burden of Loving

The yellow lights of the roaring Strand
Are dim with more than rain.
They two were walking hand in hand,
But when shall we again ?

THE BURDEN OF LOVING

YOU that I love and have lost, would God
I could love you anew,
Would God I could lighten your sorrow, be
merely glad at your joy ;
I am haunted by phantom flowers that had blown
when the skies were blue
If you had been naught but a maid, if I had
been naught but a boy.
But your tears were the whole world's tears,
tho' yours had been bitter alone,
And your smile was the mournful token of all
that was never for me ;
It was more than your sorrow that fevered my
nights, for I heard the dead folk moan,
The comfortless dead underground, and the
pitiful dead to be.

Ingratitude

I have learned a wisdom at length—to take the
day that is here,
And to drink the whole of the draught—but,
alas! for it is not joy—
And the wine is spilt, and I turn to a wish and
a dream more dear—
That you were naught but a maid, that I were
naught but a boy.

INGRATITUDE

HAD I but never heard a word or a song
Praising the Spring, and she in passing
along
Had found me a mourner where Love lay sleep-
ing,
Had I not turned to laughter from weeping?

But as a pilgrim spent on the parchéd grass,
Who hears that a bountiful lady shortly shall
pass,
Gold and food and a gourd of water bearing:
His heart is cheered and he beholds her nearing,

A Laodicean

And she, disregardful, unladen, passes him by,
Her beauty such as to hearten a man to die,
But he with aching throat what she refuses
Sobs after, and the joy she is he loses :

So Spring this blind inheritance my heart
Proclaims the bringer of Love, nor knows her
 apart :
The face that appears not, the lips beyond my
 kiss
I mourn, and the joy and solace she is I miss.

A LAODICEAN

I LOVED you not so long ago,
 But whether I love to-day
It were not wise to ask or know
 By either yea or nay.

And I to-day was glad we met,
 But whether 't was because
I loved you once or love you yet,
 What matter which it was ?

Love the Jailer

Of old our love was more precise,
Yet I was often sad,
And so to-day we'll be not nice :
Loving or no, I'm glad.

LOVE THE JAILER

SEEN, loved, possessed, familiar, lastly used
And weary in dim chambers of my heart,
Your mournful face seeks others set apart,
Fearing to know a prison in my heart.
There is nought else, for there was nought
refused.

I hung the pallid chambers of my heart
With coloured legends of old fashioning ;
I set bright pictured loves ; made music sing
In slow hushed rhythms of my fashioning
To drown the distant murmur of the mart.

Loved and departed, or by very love
Veiled, or by passion once made briefly
dear ;

Persistency

Shall all loved things at length grow love-
less here?

I pray thro' loving I am somewhat dear,
That you may love me yet for sake of love.

PERSISTENCY

I DID not sleep : in the dewy morn
I pass'd among the shivering corn.

I looked on the heavens full of peace,
And longed for my foolish love to cease.

So splendid did the sun upstart,
I thought his joy would break my heart.

I looked on the brooding clouds above,
And said, " I am weary of my love."

A thrush beyond the waves of wheat
Sang, " Love a love more sweet."

A seabird called above the sea,
Crying, " O faint heart, be free!"

Persistence

In the hot noontide crooned the dove,
"Turn, turn to a tenderer love."

The lark sang up against the sun,
"Turn, turn to a lighter one."

All the hot afternoon I lay
By the white breakers in the bay,

And with the burden of the sea
I sang with laughter, "I am free."

At eve I heard the night-wind stream
Over the hills in a drowsy dream.

"At last," I said, "the past is dead,"
And happy laid upon my bed.

But ah! the surging of the sea
Sang of a bygone thing to me,

And I awoke and cried at night:
"I love you, love, with all my might."

The Burden of Constancy

THE BURDEN OF CONSTANCY

I HAVE no cause to love you, yet
The fear of wronging long regret,
The wasted years, the words bygone
That your light feet have trampled on,
Make my love sure as when we met.

I loved you never with mere lust
Of eyes or flesh, but love I must
With all my broken body and soul,
For you alone can know the whole,
Who all but shaped my soul from dust.

As men who deem a God has made
Their lives, and turn to him, afraid,
You, who have made my life, I love,
Whom even as God no prayers move,
Who damned me and are undismayed.

My heart is bare for you to see,
Yet, having marred, you know not me :
See, I am but the self of woe,
And there is nothing else to know,
No, nothing else that I may be.

The Burden of Singing

One passion only rules my blood,
The longing to be understood,
The last desire of broken lives,
The ultimate dumb desire, that gives
My life in keeping to your mood.

THE BURDEN OF SINGING

THERE lived a singer long ago
Whereof the words are all forgot,
Except a song I chance to know :
I pray that you forget it not.

“ Let no man say when I am dead
That I in song forgot my woe,
Or say, as happier men have said,
One joy the singers only know.

“ I sang of laughter, and my eyes
Wept, for my laughter long had end :
I sang of tears, and they must rise,
For sorrow was my chosen friend.

The Burden of Singing

" I sang of love, and wept to know
How love had bruised with his feet
My lips that sang ; I sang of woe
And added to my load of it.

" And if I called a woman fair,
I thought of what one's fairness meant,
And, if I praised her perfect hair,
Shivered at one remembered scent.

" He has, that Sorrow comes unto,
One road of grey oblivion,
Where even woe seems hardly true
So be he do but wander on,

" And live the life of beasts that die,
And all that harbours memory shun,
Fearing to speak, and so did I,
Did what I feared, and was undone.

" For all I spoke of in my speech
I had, or lost, or had it not,
So, as my lot was evil, each
Was bitter, and the sweet forgot."

A Prayer

A PRAYER

FORGIVE me, friend, you must,
That I have called you crueller than fate.
Cruel was I to trust
So heavy a life to hands so delicate.

Tho' life be broken quite,
Forgive me that I chid with bitter tongue
You, for it was not right
Thus to chide one so wondering and young.

Forgive me, that at last
I may forget that I have ever grown
Bitter, or blindly cast
My faults at your pure feet, that were my own.

Forgive me, that to shame you
I said, "This have you done, now this undo."
O, what was I to blame you,
That dared not keep my heart, but gave it you?

My heart I gave, and leant
On your girl's bosom—fool was I and blind!
I have my punishment:
You, some reward, since you have made me kind.

The Burden of Memory

O child, forgive me now
As I would—ah, that I had aught to pardon !
My hurt I pray somehow
The years may heal ; my heart, that they may
 harden.

THE BURDEN OF MEMORY

BELOVED, I was tired of Love
 That bare upon his wrist a dove
And came with roses red and bays
To end the old forgotten days,
For he took on a sadder wear,
And on his brow the thorns were bare,
And he that was so wont to sing
Had not a single joyous thing,
For worn by longing for your face
He dreamed of you in every place,
And sickened of his dreamy care
And anger held him, and he bare
A hooded falcon for his dove.
Belovéd, I was tired of Love.

The Burden of Memory

Belovéd, I am tired of Love
And weary of the skies above,
Weary of day, weary of night,
Of love, of living, of delight,
For in the heart of Love is pain
That may not turn to joy again,
For though my head lay on your breast
By your lingering hands caressed,
Shadowed in a dreamless night,
Pain would grow to mar delight.
For I should think of all the years
Wherein you gave me only tears,
Despair and longing and regret,
That follow and o'ertake me yet,
The years that I grew weary of
Till more desirable than love
Grew peace, the peace that could not live
Without you, that you would not give.

Belovéd, were we old and gray
The night were better than the day,
And fairer than immortal breath
The rustle of the wings of Death.
Belovéd, were you ages long
Shut underground, whereto no song

The Burden of Memory

Of bird could ever reach, nor wind
Blow, nor summer days be kind,
Where all years in darkness passed,
No thought, no sight, no dream at last,
No longing for the sky so near,
But only madness dull and fear,
So your soul was only woe,
And woe wherever you might go,
Think you, if after ages one
Led you thither to the sun,
Bidding you see the dancing trees
And scent the flowers upon the breeze,
And cry to hear the soaring lark
You had forgotten in the dark,
Yea, bade you laugh, and walk, and speak,
You who were old and grey and weak,
Bade you, whose soul was only woe,
And woe wherever you might go,
Be glad for freedom and the light,
You would but sicken for the night,
Wherein you were not grey and weak,
And had no need to laugh or speak.
And you would cover up your eyes
From the cruel splendid skies,
And if your blood began to beat

The Burden of Memory

Again, as once when all was sweet,
Or any joy in you to stir,
Then joy would be far bitterer
And far more terrible than pain.
But how to cast it out again ?
For now the night were worse than day
For longing, you would see no way
Where peace might be ; even so am I
Afraid of joy, afraid to fly.
For how shall I of joy be sure,
Or a disheartened heart endure
The fire of joy it cannot trust,
And has not heart to say " I must " ?
Belovéd, you at last are kind :
Ah, would that you and I could find
Without the fear of love, a way
To find a peace in every day :
For now in love is never peace,
For fear his joy should ever cease.

Belovéd, I would hold your hand,
And wander to a dreaming land,
Out of the day, out of the sun,
Where all tranquil nights are one :
To wander by a desolate shore

The Burden of Memory

And hear the wind that passes o'er
The seas unfathomable sway,
The languid grasses long and grey,
To tread a way no life has trod,
Hidden from the eyes of God,
Where no stars are sown on high
To watch us always from the sky,
But an icy moon doth slumber
O'er the hills there are none may number,
Deep in the violet heavens dim,
A pearly phantom round her rim,
And there along the whispering strand
We two should wander hand in hand,
To hear the fall of the surf that sings
In dreams of unremembered things,
Or watch for long enchanted years
The silver foam of magic meres,
That always murmur to the moon,
Or hear the doves unwaking croon
Among the shimmering woods that know
No light of sun, no fall of snow,
But the lone echo of the seas :
And always happy winds of peace
Then to waters we shall come
To lie above the charmed foam,

The Fruit of Travail

My head on your most quiet breast,
To wait the sure unfailing rest :
For by the dim sea we shall lie,
Till even the moon shall fail on high,
Till nought endure but thoughtless night,
Far out of memory, out of sight
Of God or all the watchful eyes
Of silver set about the skies ;
There we shall fall asleep at last,
All passion peace, all kisses past,
My head on your beloved breast
Until the eternal shadowy rest,
When we shall be so full of peace
That even the sense thereof shall cease.

THE FRUIT OF TRAVAIL

LORD, I had known Thy cross, I had worn
Thy plaited crown,
I had borne the appointed burden, and I fainted
for the end,

The Fruit of Travail

And thus I cried, and crying saw my blood run
down :

“What fruit shall travail bear unless Thine
anger mend?”

For I had known a mercy, a thing of mine, not
thine ;

“The crown shall give me wisdom in the wear-
ing,” I had said,

“Though my song be but lamenting, yet my
tears shall be divine,

And my wisdom shall not perish, though my
pain and I be dead.”

Now that Thy hand is lifted and a peace is come
to me,

Ah, canst Thou heal the ruin Thy hands have
made complete ?

This is the end—a bleeding heart, and eyes that
cannot see,

And a bruised body and soul, and broken hands
and feet.

Now that Thy hand is lifted, what shall the
solace be ?

Where is the wisdom learned, the staff that shall
not break ?

The Dead Soul

This I have learned—that thought is driven far
from me :

This is the end—a voice of tears that cannot
speak.

THE DEAD SOUL

THE sorrow of one beloved,
The hell of helpless men,
Came to my soul and crushed it ;
I could not love her then.

I, never wearied of beauty
When I was only a boy,
Cover my face when it passes,
And turn from the path of joy.

All that is grave I shrink from,
For truth is a piteous thing,
And things that are light have often
A deadly hidden sting.

But only my soul is covered
In darkness, while my eyes
Fall upon laughing lovers
Or wander among the skies.

Threnody

My mind has not forgotten
The songs it sang of old ;
It sings them yet in the darkness
To a soul that is dead and cold.

And I too in the darkness
Listen above the grave ;
The songs are all of the beauty
And joys that others have.

And all my life I shall hear it,
The voice of honeyed lies,
Singing the joy of living
To the soul that will never rise.

THRENODY

SILENCE has come, and sleep,
On eyes no more to weep,
On quiet lips that keep
All words unsaid ;
Her rose of days undone
Gone by is all she won,
All things in her begun
Lie dead, lie dead.

Threnody

She shall not hear again
The rustle of driven rain
Athwart the flooded pane
 In midnight hours,
Nor hear from her last bed
The great wind overhead
Sweep thro' the waifs of dead
 And scattered flowers.

For her nor day nor night,
Nor sorrow, nor delight,
Nor summer, nor the white
 Pure fields of snow ;
Nor weariness, nor rest,
Nor light of east nor west,
Her dwelling is that best
 Where all men go.

Who wept shall no more weep,
Who slept shall ever sleep,
Past dreaming in the deep
 Last sleep of all ;
They hope not, nor regret,
They meet who never met,
They part who never yet
 Went past recall.

The Stranger

She is at rest, and tho'
She goes where all men go,
Nor they nor she shall know,
Or voice, or touch ;
Their days are all forgot,
Sad comfort is their lot,
Who sleeping know it not ;
There are now none such.

THE STRANGER

LET me not see your eyes,
Nay, grant me not a word,
Lest that my heart be stirred
That silent lies.

Let be : I, knowing you,
Must love ; to love were vain.
Will you for love give pain,
For roses, rue ?

You have no love to give :
What should you want with it ?
Giving, I have no wit
To happy live.

The Stranger

Will you unarm me quite ?
Behold my only hope :
With Love strongly to cope,
Put him to flight ;

Lest he, quite undismayed,
Stow my soul's riches by
In one frail bark that I
Cannot unlade ;

And grave with cruel art
Your print on all my gold,
Whose wealth were quickly told
Did you depart.

Ah, go ! lest love and pain
Make me, who day by day
Live lightly as I may,
Grow grave again.

Let be : tired hearts are brittle.
This were so bitter, too :
For all my life's love you
Would care so little.

A Ballad of Light Living

A BALLAD OF LIGHT LIVING

AH, days of Spring, have pity on us
For whom all promise is given in vain;
When all of the earth is amorous
For love of the wind and the silver rain,
Vex not our hearts, grown dull too long
To laugh for joy when the woods are bright,
Or dream in hours of twilight song:
Awake us not whose lives are light.

O, Summer, in thy time of heat,
When days are only cool at morn,
And slowly move the wanderer's feet
Among the quivering floods of corn,
Pass by all us in thy perfect pride
Of splendid day and murmuring night,
Wrapping our hearts in a drowsy tide;
Awake us not whose lives are light.

Thou, Autumn, prideful harvester,
Go by, let be thy maddening wealth,
Pass in a time of rain and stir
And wind, or like a thief by stealth,

A Ballad of Light Living

Pass by us while we haply sleep,
Or feign by day, or dream by night,
And send us dreams too slight or deep
To waken us whose lives are light.

And Winter ! season of the time
That fell when Spring had marred our years,
Pass thro' no days of flowerful rime,
But in a shrieking blast of tears
Drive thro' thy realm in hate and wrath
That harm us not whose woes are slight,
But strew not peace about thy path
To waken us whose lives are light.

For we are they that have gathered flowers
To find them fade and the thorns remain ;
We have watered in futile ways and hours
Joys that have left us no fruit but pain ;
We have cast out fear and despair and sorrow,
Love and laughter and all delight,
We have set us a watch on the day and the
morrow,
Whose hearts are sick and whose lives are
light.

To One Awakening

L'ENVOI.

Princes, and all who are wise in grief,
Heed lest the year, by day or night,
By splendour of star or ripple of leaf
Awaken ye whose lives are light.

TO ONE AWAKENING

YOU who are gay and brave and young,
You who dwell your dreams among,
I would fashion for your sake
A land where never dreams awake ;
They who are wise with dreaming eyes
Awaken, and they are not wise ;
They who in peace of heart are sure
Awake to doubt if they be pure ;
They who are gay, they who are strong
Awake, and ends their joy of song.
You who are still and grave and sweet
Shall light of soul and heavy of feet
Grow, and hollow be of heart
If you from your dreams depart.

To One Awakening

Dream, and shun the bitter days !
For your ways are not their ways,
For your wisdom is not theirs ;
Dreams, desires, hopes and prayers,
All you have of good and fair
Shall not count as either there ;
Neither glad nor pure nor wise
Shall you seem with waking eyes.

Child ! if I could make for you
A world of dreaming deeps of blue,
Of forest days of emerald light,
Of peace and shadow and delight ;
Of wandering roads where every day
Sets the wanderer on the way
To a more fresh and happy peace
Till day and night and faring cease :
A faultless pulsing sea of blue,
A land of scent and song and dew,
A heaven of stars like dew of fire,
A heart of ever new desire,—
This would I make—but ah ! behold,
This is the earth I know of old,
Purged of the life you cannot see,
But shall, despite my love and me :

Elegy

This very earth, just undefiled
Of all you go to learn, poor child !

You shall forsake your prophecy,
The world you know, that is to be ;
You shall adventure forth at last
To learn your sad forgotten past :
And how a stranger will you fare,
And how shall you be happy there ?
Would I could fashion for your sake
A land where never dreams awake !

ELEGY

HUSH ye, hush ye, all that are mourning
The dusky head of Autumn asleep ;
She in her pride had given ye warning,
Yea, done on mourning for her slumber deep ;
Wise is Autumn, a lover discreet,
Lest her high beauty too familiar grow
These days of the new waiting shall ye go
With winter not so sweet,
Cloked in cloud and with covered head,

Elegy

Gray-eyed, companionéd,
With austere wind and white un murmuring
snow.

Ye that loved her well that has left us,
Come where her loitering feet were stayed
Here, where the slumber that lately bereft us
Then when she left us, comforted her with
shade ;

Deep in the silence of sombre pines,
Wherein her passage and her days went past,
And all wild things her lovers saw her last ;
Where fruitless ivy twines
Among the mosses her gracious feet
Last trod, and last found sweet,
Where she the vesture of her pageant cast.

Hush ye, hush ye, O let no singing
Trouble the groves with her slumber quiet,
No flute, no viol, no cymbals ringing
To waken echo winging with a whispering riot
Thro' vistas holding with her and God
Silence as joy : the silence that is old
As the strange light that lit the lifeless wold
That yet no foot had trod :
And silence bring ye too for offering,

Elegy

That holy healing thing
Which is of her, let your full hearts enfold,
Now no longer her that is sleeping
Mourn or lament ye, she cometh again;
Now the songs of the winter weeping
Sound in the sleeping trouble of weary rain;
She that over the hills a-cold
Cometh is born of this high silence too,
So shall ye welcome her with love, and rue
No more your loves untold
Of her, which love forsworn shall make
Love one day for her sake
By broken troth renewed more sweetly true.

Come! for the one that cometh forget her,
Think no more upon her forgot,
With Winter walk as ye had not met her,
Yea, tho' the sense forget her, the heart shall not;
Come with joy, for again ye meet
With memory awakened yet more kind
With wingéd eagerness, her face to find
As wildly, strangely sweet,
Ah God! as your first loves shall seem
Across the Lethean stream,
The dear lips cool with the eternal wind.

Woodlands

WOODLANDS

HERE is no solitude : the eyes of Pan
Watch in the dusky frondage of the ferns,
But I am fled from solitary man,
Who to his kin forsaken ne'er returns :
His kin, that are the still eternal skies,
The windy hills, the many-meadowed dale,
The sun-steeped plains, and harvest of the year,
And night and shadow and light on hill and vale ;
And all he sees not with his exiled eyes,
That waits his wisdom and his coming here.

O strong, sweet spirit of the seasoned earth,
That I might ever in thy beauty dwell !
To learn not over-mournfully the birth
Of years, and death of all desirable ;
Thou canst but lend sweet memories amid strife,
And bring in time of sighing peaceful breath ;
For in the world men have but heavy hearts,
They, scarcely living, have forgotten death,
And, dying, hardly may remember life,
And they have parcelled life in little parts.

Memory shall come, and with it weariness,
And all the woe of a disordered world.

The Drifting Rain

It will be half a pain, half happiness,
To know that here the flowers are dew-pearled,
That here the wild rose has its perfect birth,
And the bright sunlight trembles on the grass ;
O, but to lie among the grasses deep,
Here, where no kindred foot should ever pass—
O God, to lie against the cool, sweet earth,
At rest for ever, and to know I sleep !

THE DRIFTING RAIN

UNDER the grave unblemished bluff of oaks
The windy river smokes
With drifting rain ;
The grey salt river ebbing to the sea,
Wrinkled with misery,
Shivers with pain.
Down the deep valley of the sombre wood
The pale grey drifting pillars of lofty rain,
Like shades of gods that are weary of love and
pain,
Sad, mighty spirits that have known all vain
And pace the seaward flood,

Wood and Wind

Are fleeing, ah me! are leaving the earth for
ever,
Fleeing down the valley of the dolorous river,
Fleeing out for ever to the dim and rainy sea
Where life, nor love, nor pain of love may be.
Would I could go with them,
Sharing your peace!
Would I could know with them
All vacant seas!
I, who am weary, how weary none knows,
Of regretting a voice that is mute, and the worm
at the heart of the rose.

WOOD AND WIND

THE autumn leaves were driven by my feet,
The autumn wind went thro' the hollow
wood,
Singing a lusty song among the trees.
The old red leaves fled with a rustling fleet
Thro' the reverberating solitude,
Where the wind sang with an imperious ease.

Wood and Wind

Only in shadowy places, where the thick
Entangled underwoods to no keen breath
Trembled, and gave the wind no year-long
growth,

The rotten leaves hung motionless and sick
From branches never cleansed of festering death,
In dimness never wakened out of sloth.

My heart lay sick with memories of old,
Of love and life, each grown a painful thing :
Too fond was I to wish me tid of them.
My heart was fearful of the winter's cold,
The desolate days wherein no bird may sing,
Nor any green quicken on any stem.

"But now," I said, "I will take up my heart
Out of the shadow of rain-dropping boughs,
And rest it in the unbroken wind of years,
And from all lamentable memories part ;
Cleanse me, O wind of life ! till spring shall rouse
A softening laughter from the winter's tears."

"Art thou so sure," my heart made answer to
me,
"That spring shall come to me with riotous
green,

Winter's Joy

Or shall I, casting the dead spring away,
Thus, by vain hoping, hopelessly undo me?
How dare I cleanse me for the fate unseen?"
"Ay me, which fate?" was all that I could say.

WINTER'S JOY

BY wold and holt and valley
Scampered the scouring breeze,
No flush was on the heather,
No leaf was on the trees.

The sea and heaven of winter
Met in a steeled embrace;
The wind leapt off the Channel
And shouted in my face.

Far thro' the seething coppice
The whispering drift was brown,
Asway were all the branches,
And every leaf was down.

Winter's Joy

But all the trees were shouting,
And all the hills were sweet ;
The rascal wind was humming
A tune to stir my feet.

The wind of time was blowing
And buffeting my mind ;
It tore my sad old memories
And swept them out behind.

And oh, I said, if winter
Doth not abash the earth,
If being poor as Adam
She shows a sturdy mirth,

Take all my thickets harbour,
O stately blast of Time !
Bare boughs may chaunt the carol
Of poverty sublime !

For if in surly winter
My heart shall dare to sing,
Fate, thou art all defeated !
What will it be in spring ?

Renunciation

RENUNCIATION

THE heavy elm above the roof
All the autumn days
Moaned in the wicked wind
Out upon his ways.

All night and every night
At falling of the leaf
I heard the ancient elm-tree
Sobbing his grief.

All his leaves that were so green
Withered hung and brown ;
Every roar the wind gave
It showered a hundred down.

Every leaf he cherished
And every leaf must lose ;
Till the last of all was gone
His fate he would refuse.

For half his leaves the south-west
Had rudely torn away
He mourned, and for the others
That waited for their day.

Renunciation

All night and every night
At falling of the leaf
I heard the ancient elm-tree
Sobbing for grief.

But on a windy morning
When frost was on the pane
And up the eastern heaven
The moon began to wane

I rose and there beheld him
Dancing overhead,
His latest leaf abandoned,
His last hope dead.

There he stood and whistled,
Naked as a seed,
Merrily, merrily,
Merrily indeed.

Gaily mother-naked
Drummed and whistled he ;
Fearing nought, for all had fallen,
Lo, he was free !

Renunciation

Therefore I beseeching
Turned me unto Fate :
I have done with hoping
Tho' I hoped of late,

Naked came I hither,
Naked will I be ;
Take away my latest hope,
Set thou me free !

Once I sought for many a thing ;
Tho' all of them I got,
Saving one, for loss of that
Bitter was my lot !

But if I ask for nothing
All that I receive
A rare thing shall seem to me,
And how should I grieve ?

If it be a rising
Of clouds up the west,
If it be the silence
Of woods at rest,

A Song in Winter

If it be a passing face,
Or a rosy sail,
Or a dream in the dawn,
Joy shall never fail :

The wide skies above me,
The wide earth below,
Not a friend to love me,
Not a face to know,

If I ask for nothing
All that I shall have
A rare thing shall seem to me ;
Yea ; even the grave.

A SONG IN WINTER

BETWEEN high hedges dew-besprent
The road is white with frost ;
In winds that veer in the heavens clear
The rook and his cry are tossed.

A Song in Winter

The day is like a summer dawn,
With pale and gentle sun ;
An Arctic noon, or an afternoon
In a land where life is done.

Still and pale are the downs around,
Pale and bare to the sky ;
Pale and still is every hill,
But the wind is awake on high.

The morn is merry, the road is hard,
And leads a pleasant way ;
The robin strong he pipes a song
Dear to my heart to-day.

For I shall find her high on the down,
Warm in the winter wind,
With her young face fresh in her tresses' mesh,
And eyes serene and kind.

So ring to my foot, O frosty road,
For merry your echoes are ;
O robin, sing as tho' it were spring,
Or a sweeter season far.

A Song of the West

A SONG OF THE WEST

O SWEET, sweet the tender rain,
Cool to my hands and face,
And the wind of the western seas again,
And the old familiar place.

Over the downs the clouds blow free,
The wind sings out in the coppice ;
Down by the tossing foam of the sea
The sand seethes over the poppies.

O, the joy of the great salt wind,
And O, the joy of the rain !
You sing the sweet song to my mind
I longed to hear again.

O, the joy of the windy sea,
Mad from the land to the sky ;
You sing the joy of life to me,
And O, the grey gull's cry !

But O, for the young girl coming to me,
Coming to me again,
Down by the hissing foam of the sea,
Her brown face wet with the rain !

The Blossom of Love

Her hair is cold as a rainy night,
Her cheeks are like the berry,
And the flight of the foam is swift and white,
Where the seas are mad and merry!

THE BLOSSOM OF LOVE

MY heart was withered with a love,
The love was withering too:
My heart was but a sorry tree
For any fruit that grew.

My heart was grown so frail, so weak,
The flower perhaps had died;
But I was fain to set my heart
Under the heavens wide.

Because my love had wrecked my heart,
I rose in wrath one day,
And plucked the withered blossom off
That sucked its blood away.

The Hour

My heart grew straight and fair and strong.
The bitterest thing came now ;
One night the blood-red blossom of love
Burst forth on every bough.

Blood-red, thick and sweet it blew,
And every flower had breath
To mock : " O fool, behold your heart
Is strong enough for death ! "

THE HOUR

THE air dreams under the roof of the summer
trees,
And the odour of leaves of the old year moulder-
ing
Faints as a sorrow lulled in a golden ease
In the quiet of inviolate aisles where no voices
sing,
Where the leaves know no wind, nor the emerald
fire a change ;
There the live silence is stiller than death or
night,

The Hour

Securer than peace, and fulfilled of a mystery,
A slumbering sense of an imminent, old delight,
Known once and possessed, unremembered, too
splendid and strange
For lives that awaken or dream, or for days
that be.

And I, I am one with the silence ; all pleasure,
all pain
That are mine in the right of the past and the
years to be,
As a garment are shed, as the fashion of fallen
rain
That melts, and is not, and is one with the
molten sea ;
Here is nought of me now but is born of the
day and hour,
As the wave is conceived of the smiting of seas
and wind,
That lives till the feet of it shine on an alien
shore,
As the kiss of the earth and the summer beget
the flower

A Wish

That endures till the flight of the lover that
none shall bind,
I am changed till the hour be changed, and the
noon no more.

A WISH

O LOVE, that you and I
Were birds to follow the sun,
High in the trackless sky
Till time be done !

O love, that you and I
Were fish that move in the deep,
Till the deepest seas be dry,
And the winds asleep !

For the loves that I love are two,
That love not me,
Freedom I love and you
You who are free.

The Castaway

And one of the loves were bitter,
But I am the more undone,
For Fate, lest I should outwit her,
Made both as one.

And I in fetters was born,
And you born free,
And you have nothing but scorn,
But scorn, for me.

O I would we were winds of the sky,
Or streams of the deep,
Till the stars flicker out on high,
And God be a sleep.

THE CASTAWAY

I WAS a falcon jessed by the fowler Fate ;
Jessed and unflown, you had no eyes for me,
You rather watched in the heavens delicate
The lofty flight of rushing birds let free ;
You had no eyes for me, whose eyes were blind,
But watched the veering merles high in the
streaming wind.

The Castaway

I was a bird encagé, my song sad,
My song remembering the lights of spring,
So of my singing no delight you had,
But all my music was a fretful thing ;
You sent your eyes after the spiring lark
Bewildering with joy the holy morning dark.

I was a salmon trapped among the stakes
In a thin pool forsaken of the sea,
You heard the pæan the wild water makes
Far down the channel of its liberty ;
You had no eyes for my leaping silver sides,
But loved the keen dark forms deep in the
 swerving tides.

How could you know the sun was more to me
Than to the hawk that has him all the day ?
That the unbrooked wayfarers of the sea
Less knew her soul than me a castaway ?
That love was breaking my enchained heart,
Love of the world you loved, wherein you lived
 your part ?

You met me never abreast on the moving sky,
Or in the cool deep waters of the main,

Then

My broken singing was no tongue whereby
To gladden you, or say what it was fain,
Yet say, O sweet, when I am hushed in rest,
My kinsmen were the chaunting rain, the unreined wind of the west.

THEN

COOL the wind in the poplars tall,
Making them sway
In laughter streaming above the wall,
Ah, so gay !

The clouds were round and white and soft
All over the sky,
Dreaming of their own beauty aloft,
Ah, so high !

Blue the sea with rivers of green,
With flecks of white ;
We saw the sails that we had not seen,
Ah, so bright !

Then

Sweet the grass of the cliff in the sun,
The hot hard grass ;
The pink sea-daisies one by one
Felt the wind pass.

Cool your lips as the shy swift wind,
Ah ! not more blue
Were the skies than your eyes were, not more
kind,
Ah ! not more true.

Do you remember the surge of the trees,
The sea like a flower,
The low red wall and the lovely breeze
And the perfect hour ?—

When, poor love, and on what a day,
And by what shore ?—
A day forgotten and far away,
To come no more.

The Heart

THE HEART

OF everything I had or sought
I was more careless than I had thought.

Therefore one day I drew apart
And looked in silence on my heart.

"What do you want, O heart?" I said,
"The touch of a woman that is dead."

"O foolish heart," I cried, "be still ;
Or love you another, if love you will."

"Nay," said my heart, "but the woman died
With lies on her lips, and her tears undried."

Since then I dare not walk apart,
And look no more upon my heart.

LAST WORDS

SEAGULLS wheel across the sea,
Crying all the day,
Calling, calling back to me
One that's far away.

The Revenge

Sister, he may come again
To find a bolted door,
And see thro' every dusty pane
Dust on the naked floor.

If he ask you of me, child,
With eyes that do not weep,
Tell him, tell him that I smiled
When I fell asleep :

Only if his eyes be dim
Tell him, for my sake,
That I had forgotten him,
Lest his heart should break.

THE REVENGE

THE wind flew drumming over the hill,
Calling the sky to follow,
Above my head it whistled in
The hedge along the hollow ;
There was no man for a mile around
But I, and the corpse on the ground.

The Revenge

Above the hidden hillside lane
The hedge was full of laughter,
Laughter shook the skeleton boughs,
Never a tear came after
For him in the nettles bleeding still,
Him I had come to kill.

My heart was high, my soul was gay,
And every care had vanished,
I marvelled why the sky was grey
When he from it was banished:
The world was sweet, for he was dead!
I laughed in the wind, and fled.

O the rush of the wrack o'er the tossing trees
And the landward-huddling hedges,
The lash of the thorns on my hasting knees
And the swish of the stricken sedges!
The wind of the north was mad with joy,
And I, dear God! was a boy.

In Prison

IN PRISON

I AM half content by day,
When the sun thro' the grating high
Slowly makes a golden way
Curved across the wall, and I
Feel his warmth invade the wall,
While I dream of hill and field,
And the azure over all,
Over all the trees that yield
To the breeze that never blows
Here within my prison cell ;
I am glad to think on those,
I remember them so well.

But at fall of night the wind,
Born of the unfettered sea,
In the forest close behind
Struggles for his liberty :
I can hear him all the night,
Cursing, hissing, roaring, shaking,
Raging in his awful fight,
Till my maddened heart is breaking
But to hear him struggle so :
O the glory tho' he fail !

The Bridal Night

O the splendid forest foe!—
I am checked by a rusty nail.

All his fever, all his rage,
All his wildness in my blood,
Sting and burn as in my cage
I lie like a log of wood :
If I scream the walls are dumb,
If I struggle, rusty chains
Cut me round the wrist and thumb,
If I cease my leaping veins
Rage because they cannot burst,
Madness will not come, nor age,
I shall beat my brains out first

THE BRIDAL NIGHT

The Bride.

TARRY awhile, the fire is red,
The dim air sweet
With bruised reeds we slowly tread
Under our feet;

The Bridal Night

Wait awhile, wait in the gloom,
No word repeat,
The conscious silence in the room
Seems to me meet,
For now the merry guests are gone
And we are left alone,
With none to gaze or look upon
But the man of stone
Holding up the mantel high
With the maiden slim,
And the shadowy people shy
On the arras dim.

The Bridegroom.

Nay, they tarry, the maidens fair,
You to untire,
With song that seems the soul of the air,
The soul of desire,
Combing with combs of gold your hair
By the red fire,
Where the bed is wide and white,
All the hangings green,
Green with gold, that every night
You shall lie between.

The Bridal Night

The Ghost.

The hour is nigh, the bell will ring,
Prepared is the bed,
The weary wind shall a bride-song sing
Over your head.
Four bare boards for a bed are met
You shall lie between,
Four bare boards, but the coverlet
Soon shall be green
With shining of sun and rustle of wet
Fair to be seen.

The Bridegroom.

You are cold, my love, my love, you are cold !

The Bride.

Nay, I am not.
Take my hands, they are yours to hold ;
See, they are hot.
Hold them very close and long,
Never let them go.

The Bridegroom.

Hark, the maidens raise the song,
Singing high and low !

The Bridal Night

I kiss your hands, your eyes, your hair ;
Belovéd, go !

The Bride.

The ivy taps on the casement there,
The ivy, say !
The song is over, or very low ;
Nay, it has died away.

The Ghost.

Mine is the only voice to know
After to-day.

The Bridegroom.

Nay, they are singing loud their rime,
Singing at the door !

The Ghost.

Now the hour is ready to chime,
Song you shall hear no more.

The Bride.

The song is done, or it is not time.

The Bridal Night

The Bridegroom.

Nay, but the songs implore !
Love, you are pale, you are cold, you are cold !

The Ghost.

Cold you shall be evermore.
A ring of gold binds him to you;
Rings may be snapt in twain;
But we are bound with blood and dew
Not to be dry again.

The Bride.

Ah God, the dew when love I knew,
The sweet, the shame, and the pain !

The Ghost.

Ah God, the blood shed out for you
The night that I was slain !

The Bridegroom.

Nay, what dew, what pain, what shame ?
What is your speech ?

The Bride.

The night you called me by my name
Under the beech.

The Bridal Night

The Ghost.

The night your stealthy brothers came
Silence to teach.

The Bride.

Let be my hands, let be my hair !
Nay, I but go
To look thro' the curtained casement there.

The Bridegroom.

Nay, what to know ?

The Bride.

Because, a maid, I never shall see
The stars again.

The Ghost.

The stars were changed that night with me,
When I was slain.

The Bridegroom.

Will you muse ? I will not speak
Here by the fire.

The Bridal Night

The Ghost.

Only his heart shall the silence break,
Mad with desire ;
But harder yet my heart shall beat
When you are dead,
When hands to hands and feet to feet
We two are wed.

The Bride.

What is the word of blood you speak ?

The Ghost.

The word is true.
A bond is on us, O false and meek,
Of blood and of dew ;
Now at the hour the revenge I seek,
I am here for you.

The Bride.

They said you had gone over sea that day
When I awoke.
I thought you had loved and ridden away ;
Then my heart broke.

The Bridal Night

The Ghost.

Ah God, you are true !

The Bride.

You are true, my love !

The Bridegroom.

O my fair bride,
Leave the night and the stars thereof,
Come to my side !

The Ghost.

Open the casement you lean above,
Fling it back wide !

The Bridegroom.

Why do you finger the silver ring
That fastens close
The latticed casement ? O hark, they sing !
The last hour goes !

The Bride.

(The song of death is a sweeter thing,)
I lean to gather a rose.

The Bridal Night

The Bridegroom.

Open it not ! Nay, for the air
Is chill to-night.

The Bride.

(Not so chill as the lodging where
I shall alight.)
It is open !

The Ghost.

Sweet, I gather your hair
In both my hands.
We go together, my bride, my fair,
To what far lands ?
Thy love has freed me, my love, my love,
I, bound in my bed
With the cold small worms, and the earth above.

The Bridegroom.

Dead !

BOOK III

1

1

THE ESCAPE FROM FATE

WAS it our cowardice, that we in terror
Fled from the truth, our fate and ourselves
refused?

Who dreamed the merciful error,
The solace abused,
Sought for its wages irrevocable despair,
And trapped men refuged as a beast in its lair?

Why were we cursed with speech, why ever given
The power of weaving the fatal veil of words
No man of men has riven,
Tho' with a hundred swords
Of love, entreaty, shame, delight, and fire,
That shattered, he has sought to free his soul's
desire?

Speech is in vain, and silence. Only hearken,
You never shall hear in quiet my soul outreach

The Escape from Fate

Free of the shadows that darken
Of sight, of speech;
We have fled the truth, and given ourselves
the lie,
And the lie is awake in the silence, and shall
not die.

The end is near, and we in going lightly
Are cheated of the final peace of doom,
The peace of men that nightly
Clamoured and wept in gloom
Till pity could weep no more, till fear was dumb,
And death in mercy before itself was come.

Now in the last fierce hours beyond remanding
Vainly we seek for pity, in vain for love;
In vain, in vain demanding
From the calm heavens above
A passing hour of mercy; to none but the grave
This solace is granted, whose purchase we dared
not brave.

We shudder, and fear one another; in fear we
wonder
If each is the thing that seems; and yet each
soul,

The Farewell

Wiser than we, thereunder
Suspects the whole,
And yearns to the fellow it cannot see or hail;
For the words and the wisdom that come to us
lightly, fail.

THE FAREWELL

O SAD and light and sweet,
O friend whom we must lose,
It is a little thing to-day
Thou dost my love refuse.

For when I by thee sit,
Tho' there be many there,
An urgent siren-dreadful call
Haunts the familiar air.

It is thy soul that goes
So soon to the strange place,
Thy soul that thou in fear hast hid
And wilt not see its face :

The Farewell

That dare not go alone
Unloved, unknown by thee,
That calleth in a dreadful fear
My soul to go from me :

Wiser than thou, it rends
My body and soul in twain ;
I dare not meet thee now, my friend,
Nor hear that call again :

Lest my fond soul too soon
Answer this piteous dread,
Lest I should haunt thy helpless life
Helpless, till thou wert dead.

Love where thou wilt : I go.
That fearful wooing I
Dare not to dare : until I first
Meet thee unveiled, good-bye.

For, when thou goest forth,
Out of the tides of space
Thy cry will find me ; I shall come,
O friend ! And see thy face.

In Alienation

IN ALIENATION

IN the dark summer heat
The plane leaves beat,
Flapping overhead in the trees of the square;
The city is asleep;
Dim night has fallen as deep
Over the desert streets as in the starlit air.

I stand beneath her chamber: the gaunt house
Grins blank in every window: is she there?
The lamp under the leafage throws up the wall
A sickly yellow glare, and over it all
Flit hundreds of shadows of leaves, each like a
gnawing mouse
In a feverish dream, a mouse out of the night
Come with a thousand others to gnaw the old
house away:
Over the house flickers the light
The sinister shadows dance and flicker away.

High up in silent air,
Beloved, are you there?
If there you be, my sweet,
Why is the ghostly street

In Alienation

Full of the fear of death
To me beneath ?
And if you be not there
But far, I know not where,
What means this pain
As though we had met again ?

Will nothing break the horrible silence ? Hush !
The sound of my heart will wake the sleeping
square !

And then at every window, dead and black,
A face will flatten, O, faces everywhere,
White, or grey, or sick with a yellow flush,
In dread of the fearful darkness awake at their
back,

Will glare, and mutter, and gibber at me, and
leer,

The faces of all the dead that live in the square
Blindly glaring at me, with hate unexpressed,
Because I have broken their rest !

Ah God ! there was peace in the night ! but now
there is none ;

Nor ever shall be, I think, to a naked soul.

In Alienation

There is peace in the sun, when all is bare to
the light,
When light covers up the world, and hides the
whole
Of the things that are out in the dark, the unseen
fears,
And the love that for very terror is void of tears.

Your window is open, belovéd : O, high overhead
Do you slumber or wake, with darkness over your
face,
Or does the silence cover a desolate bed,
Or does a stranger slumber perchance in your
place ?
Nay, but it ever was so ! I knew not, I,
If the soul that I loved were indeed in your body
sweet,
Or far and unmet, and out of the reach of cry
Or prayer, or of love : and here in the phantom
street,
Here my belovéd's window I wait below,
But if she be here I know not, I shall not know.

Nay, in the ghostly gloom
The window of her room

A Light Ending

Looms dumbly open to a vacant sky :
No sound, no sound,
Dead houses all around
Rise void of meaning : nothing lives but I.
Only along the street
The lamp-lit leaves beat.

A LIGHT ENDING

HERE was a man who loved beyond his
heart

A woman there was little use to woo,
For sorrowing had been her childhood's part,
And her girl's part was death and sorrow too :
So he went forth to buy oblivion
With loveless kisses pitiful and wine,
But he grew weary of his revelling,
For always to his heart a voice would sing
The tale of dreams that he must hear alone,
Yet aye her fingers in his dream would twine.

He came to her he loved beyond his dreams,
And held his face against her breast, and wept.

A Light Ending

But she was weary of pity that ever seems
Too weak to comfort, having never slept.
"Vex me no more with tears, poor lover of
mine,"

She said, "I am weary of a love too deep ;
Let my few days be filled with laughter now,
Lest thought, if any hour wax tired or slow,
Seize on my soul : I will pour the last red wine
In careful heedlessness : thereafter, sleep."

She would have none of sorrow, save her own ;
His she would none of ; his he could not hide,
So he went hopelessly alone, alone,
Treading the bitter ways where none abide
For long, or madness takes them, or they die ;
And so do many, but some pass away
Into a barren land of thirsty fields,
That no rain falls upon, that no fruit yields,
And he beheld most foul insanity
Crouch in the twilight of the unnatural day.

So awful fear fell on him, and he fled,
And brake into the land of hopeless men
That walk with weary faces grey like lead,
And whoso speaks they answer not again

A Light Ending

Save by a shuddering silence, or by tears.
And he would fain have heard some speech at
last :

"Who bears such woe, and is not mad," he said,
"Tell me his secret, or I am but dead."
And so he waited, trembling with the fears
Of that most bitter country he had passed.

"We will have none of thee, poor friend," they
said,
"Pitiful brother, vex us not with grief ;
Our lives and hearts forgotten lie and dead,
Our dreams gone past like any autumn leaf ;
Thou art so newly from the lands of life,
Thy sorrow is too clamouring and mad :
We dare not look upon despair or fears,
For we dare only watch, with envying tears,
Those who have never met with woe or strife,
Those who have not forgotten to be glad."

He came to her he loved and said : "Behold,
Take all the love I bear your weeping eyes,
And all the happy love I bare of old,
And all such tenderness no service buys :
Cast them away, and I will say no word ;

A Light Ending

I think you shall not know I am not glad.
If you be pitiful, forget, and say :
' This love, this life, this heart I cast away,
Lest by their sorrow my poor heart be stirred,
And pity that which once no pity had.' "

She cast them forth, his love and life and heart,
Cast all things forth except his lips and hands,
And she was glad of him, who dwelt apart
In ghastly haunted ways of ruinous lands,
Even while his lips were fastened on her own.
He spoke no word of sorrow ; all the while
She, like a child in fear of a harsh voice,
Would put the future from her, and rejoice,
Making each day of hers a day alone ;
She was half happy : he would sometimes smile.

Her broken heart was full of dreams outworn,
And he had only learned of life how sweet
That might have been which now must be for-
lorn ;

And he was calm, however his heart beat,
Lest he crying out with pity, she should know
How pitiful she were ; and she would keep
Within the limit of the passing day ;

The Voice at Night

His arms would hold her all the painful way,
Till all days grew indifferent and slow,
Till the last day, of her eternal sleep.

"And now," he said, "she is at rest, at peace,
She is asleep in the last sleep of all.
"O God," he said, "that sleep shall never cease,
No solace come to her, nor love at all!
O, she was never happy! now her tears
Shall never be atoned for: by her side
Even my love for her she cannot know."
He heard her life, born to be tortured, go
Sobbing along the infinity of years,
Till madness came, and by his hand he died.

THE VOICE AT NIGHT

THREE days you had been dead;
The doom Death spoke three years ago
Had fallen on that so unwilling head,
And you must go.
Each day, dreadful and sweet, of those dead years
I knew you dead: dried up were all my tears.

The Voice at Night

In the close night I lay
And waited for the dawn, that was not near.
I heard a tree asway
On a far hill ; but else a silence clear
Filled all the valley, making that low noise
A strange and fearful voice,
Intolerably lonely as the white low stars
That thro' fantastic bars
Of orchard branches, or in blackness dead
Glittering, and full of solitude unsaid,
Shone thro' the casement open to the night
As on my bed I waited for the light.

O, it was then, was then,
When life was like a dream and knew no tears,
Unreal, void of all the things to men
Desirable, and all the perished years :
When the lone tree gave o'er,
Over the sea of silence, beyond the shore,
A silent cry, as tho' the heavens spoke,
Fluttered upon my heart, that woke,
And body and soul were aching toward the cry
Imperious, that filled the eternal sky.

I knew you ! tho' I said not Here, nor There.
As happier lovers do

The Voice at Night

I felt your presence, tho' it may be you
Were gone more far
Than is the furthest star.
Only your cry kept on,
That I too should be gone.

Ah, it was you indeed !
And you had need of me, such utter need !
Was it, on some strange shore
You broke upon the life none understands,
The still and awful joy, to you not sweet,
Tho' yours for evermore,
And found, poor child ! the splendour cold and
 high
Of what all alien sky ?—
And held toward me those piteous girlish hands,
In longing for a poor familiar kiss ?
Ah ! was it this ?

Or was it, when the last brief sleep was done,
You knew your spirit and mine were one
Past the last ruin of the last cold sun ?
And you alone must wait
Long years without the unresponsive gate
That shall not open till it let both in

The Voice at Night

Who only may begin
The new strange life together—ah ! as one
For ever, tho' the ways of stars be run ?

Or was it in that hour when you awoke
To gaze with other eyes, a new light broke,
So that my soul you knew, made wise
With the last wisdom of your final skies,
And your soul spoke ?
Ah ! then you knew
(O could I think it !) all my love for you,
And you must love me. Was it love
Calling to me, from whence, beside, above ?

Ah, you had need, have need of me !
Yea, and the veil of lies
Is rent, and utterly your sight is wise,
And yet, your voice that cries !
Is there none dead before you, none at all
To comfort you with silence, that you call
Thro' night, thro' day, out of the life of death
With sweet and awful voice, that makes life's
breath
Come chill, and with dear dreadful pain
Forth from my body divides my soul again ?

A Dream of One Dead

Belovéd, look. Now first
I bow my neck beneath the once accurst,
Accepted yoke : under the goad of Fate
Abide my time, for all at last is well.
Chide not the hours ! nor with presumptuous
thirst
Urge me to drag Him onward, tho' I tell
The minutes of the years wherethro' we wait.

A DREAM OF ONE DEAD

LAST night I had a dream : I woke
Out of most happy dark,
And I was walking in a city street
By a poor waste iron-bounded park ;
Sadly I went, and spoke
To one whose feet
Were weak against the wind that swept along
And crashed a windy song
Thro' the sere poplars overhead that showered
On us their leaves deflowered,
Their pattering leaves deflowered.
I know not what we said : but she,

The Revolt

(She who is dead)
Caught with one thin hand at her hat,
And laughed at me,
Because the wind would have his mastery,
And she was wilful too : we laughed at that.
Man knows, such little things
Have stings.

THE REVOLT

I WOKE in my cold bed,
And heard the great wind pass
Thro' bare elms overhead,
And the rain on the sodden grass
Pelting all the night.
The wind had veered to the right,
And the voice of the driven rain
Leapt on the flooded pane.

It was not the moan of the wind
Nor the sobbing voice of the rain
That troubled so my mind
That I could not sleep again,

The Revolt

But the thought of a day of old
When the woods were wet and cold,
When she and I in the light
Of the fire dreamed at night.

When I have tried to think
How her lips used to smile
When I would sit and drink
Her beauty in the while,
It was quite gone from me,
But now I seemed to see,
And heard her very voice—
Alas, not to rejoice!

And in my pulsing eyes
Swift looks of her dear face,
As the red fire would rise
In that forsaken place,
Would mock me horribly,
And there came over me
A hopeless passion hot
For her who now is not.

And as I longed for her
I bit my wrists, and said:

The Revolt

" God, shall I taste this fear
Again, that I thought dead ?
That fear of every day
To live with her away ?
How did I bear that pain
I cannot bear again ? "

Then the wind moaned on high,
And I turned in my bed ;
I could not scream or cry,
But hard I beat my head
Upon my pillow cold ;
I moaned, and tried to hold
My brows with fingers tense
As tho' to dull their sense.

The wind about the house
Cried like a voice at last,
And off my burning brows
I took my hands, and cast
My body on the floor,
And cried out o'er and o'er,
" O love that I loved so,
I shall go mad, I know ! "

The Revolt

I could not hear the sleet,
Nor wind, nor sound at all,
But heard my pulses beat
Pitiless, rhythmical,
Like swift blows on my brain,
And I sprang up again ;
I saw dim shape on shape
And horrid mouths agape.

I could no darkness see,
But grey shapes eddied nigh
That glided up to me
And passed my shoulders by.
They rose up in the gloom
And filled the reeling room.
Quickly the lamp I lit,
And I sat down by it.

I called out in my fear :
" O love, come back from death ! "
Distantly I could hear
The wind and my quick breath
Above the echoing pain
Swift throbbing in my brain.
" Come back, O speak," I said,
" Or else I shall go mad."

The Revolt

I opened then the chest
Where the small desk was laid
With all her letters prest.
So much was I afraid
Away I dared not look,
Yet my whole body shook ;
I moaned in helpless fear
Of all that I must bear.

I took her letters out,
O words of one long dead !
I spread them all about
Upon my quiet bed,
The scent she favoured hung
About them all ; I flung
My arms upon the bed,
And on them hid my head.

I thrust my mouth hard down
On sheets her hand had pressed :
Poor letters creased and brown,
Long carried in my breast !
Yet still a lingering scent
Clung to them all, and went
Like fire thro' every vein.
I could not speak for pain.

The Revolt

My body all was grown
One heart that beat and beat.
I could not even moan,
Grown numb with pain complete.
Frail ribbons round them tied
Brushed my hot face, and cried
How long ago fell there
The sweetness of her hair.

I kissed one folded sheet,
And opened it, and read.
I know how my heart beat
When yet she was not dead
To see her writing, now
How could I read it, how
Her handwriting behold
When she was dead and cold?

Then I was sick with fear
Because these had such power
To pain me every year,
To torture me each hour.
"O, shall I not be free
Dead girl," I said, "from thee?"
I shrank, yet pressed my face
Much harder on the place.

The Revolt

Then suddenly I knew
I should go mad or die.
I shuddered, and I threw
My head back ; not a cry
Broke from me, and I took
Each letter, all the book
Of those few years we had—
And still I was not mad.

I gathered them and bound
The ribbons over them ;
I found a glove, and found
A kerchief with a hem
Of silk her fingers sewed.
I took them all—a load
Heavier than death or fate,
And thrust them in the grate.

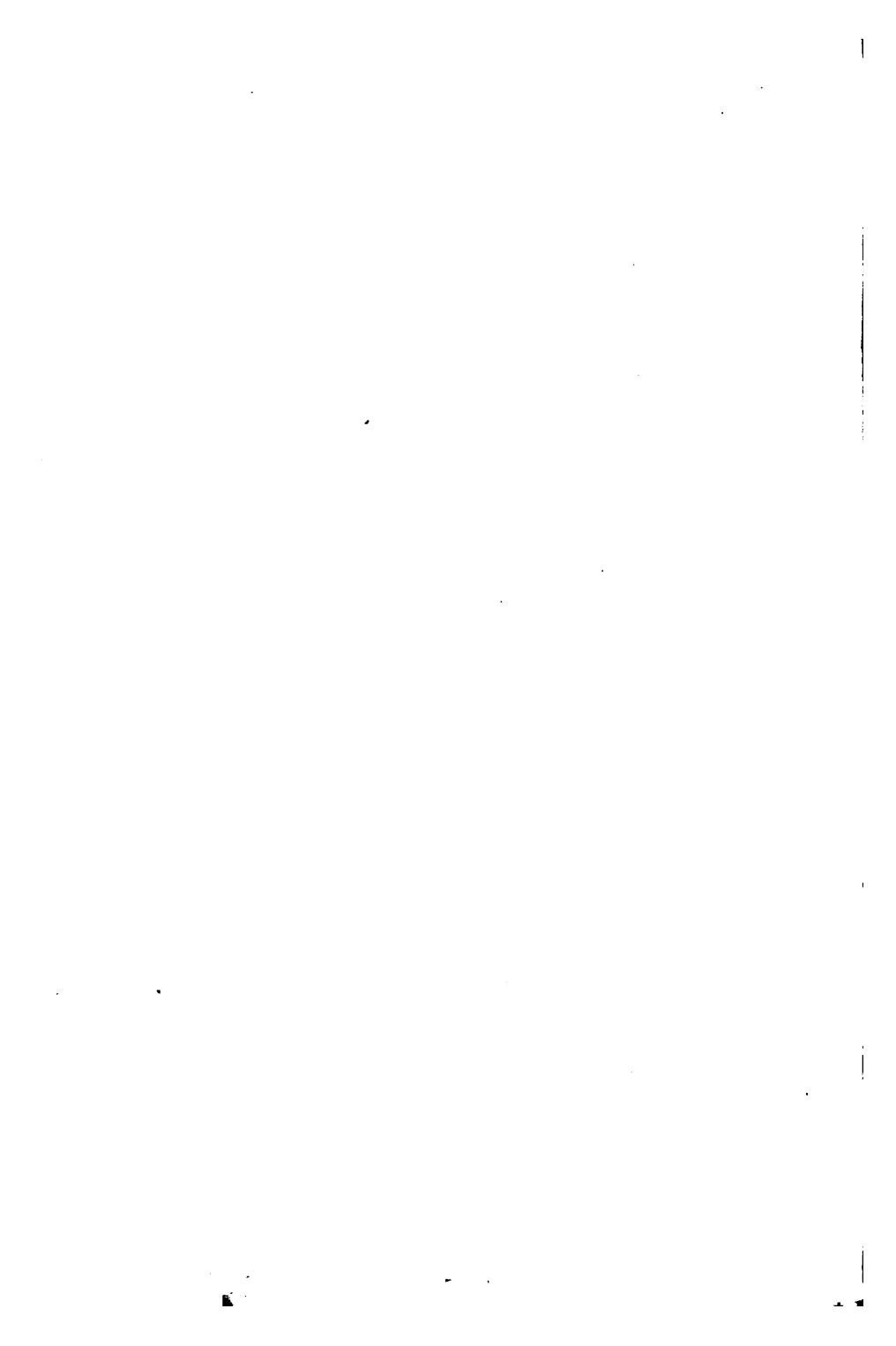
I held a light to them,
And watched them flame and burn,
Letters and silk and hem.
I could not move or turn,
But said " Now shall not I
Be free—this is a lie :
Only I know I must
Have nothing left but dust."

The Revolt

The wind in the chimney roared :
The letters in a blaze
Sent up their flame, and poured
Their heat upon my face.
Only when they were burned
I staggered up and turned,
Now utterly bereft ;
Nothing of her was left.

Between the bars the ash
Was red, the windows grey.
The sodden elms awash
Moaned for the birth of day.
O come not, day ! Yet O,
Night, wilt thou never go ?
O day and night and year,
I shall go mad with fear !

BOOK IV



WIND OF THE WEST

THE long grey river sleeps,
The stars are thick above,
Only the west wind weeps
Like a soul sick for love.

Over the woodland ridge
It sweeps on weary wings,
And round the lonely bridge
Whispers forgotten things.

Rest on your weary wings,
O hush, wind of the west,
Your song of outworn things
That will not let me rest.

Penumbra

PENUMBRA

THE far indifferent blue of night
Broods on the marshes, faintly green,
Veiled in the soft ambiguous light
Of evening vapour whitely cool,
Dreaming over the slumbering pool,
Wrapping the rushes in between,
The rushes rustling through the night.

Night is brooding over the sky
And in the heart of the shrouded lake ;
The bat quivers in silence by ;
The sound of frogs jars and is still,
Elusive, like a faery mill ;
And hesitating stars awake
Dimly about a dreaming sky.

THE NIGHT WIND

WHEN I came forth of the wood
The western night was green,
Over the night of the trees
Where I had been.

The Night Wind

All along the clearing
Black with hissing ling
The white ruts were sandy,
Dimly glimmering.

Out of the eastern blue,
Where golden Jupiter swung,
A cold wind was blowing,
A cold song it sung.

But all among the bushes
Lurking in the dale
The hot air of the daytime
Lingered thro' the vale.

And as the wind grew colder
Every brooding pool
Of hot earth-scented air
Was ruffled by the cool.

So as I went walking
Struck in wafted bands,
The hot sweet air and the cold air
Across my face and hands.

After Rain

AFTER RAIN

NO more the raindrops fall,
But pattering thro' the leaves
Flash and are musical
About the cottage eaves.

Now clouds of argent snows
That sail the fresher sky
Blaze in the leafage close
That rocks above my eye.

The sparrows chirping fight
Thro' many a heavy tree
Afire with emerald light
And shake the rain on me.

Plaints of the brooding dove
From many an orchard sound ;
A star of white above
The sea-gull swerves around.

Far on the wooded height
Whispers the questing wind,
Who stoopeth not his flight
But leaves the vale behind.

After Rain

Between ambrosial trees
Deep down the river looms;
Glossy and green as these,
More full of richer glooms.

Between the mirrored shows
Of woods on either hand
The sharp sea-water flows
For miles and miles inland.

Between the hanging woods
Of either splendid side,
Wherein the wood-dove broods
And is not satisfied,

Far, by the otter's lair,
Under the summer sky,
Under the oaks, I hear
The porpoise plunge and sigh:

Then charmed silence laves
The river's every reach,
Till the wide-ringéd waves
Lisp on the languid beach.

August

AUGUST

I WANDERED where the pine-trees made
A faultless house of sun and shade ;
The pines were red thro' many a glade ;
A russet carpet there was laid.

By still gold pools of the sun's light
The red trunks of the pines were bright :
I saw wood-pigeons wheeling white,
And heard them throbbing out of sight.

The lacing pine-boughs were not proof
To hot light shed thro' all their roof ;
The place was all a woven woof
Of drifting sun and shadow aloof.

The noonday stillness held its peace,
But high in all the scented trees
Its breath would shortly sigh and cease,
As if half weary of great ease.

I was most happy there to lie,
To see small havens of blue sky
In the dark roof of pine-boughs high,
And watch the small birds flutter by.

August

The wide space of my woodland house
Was roofed with interwoven boughs ;
The rich air could but hardly rouse
Their silence, yet it reached my brows.

Of yesterday I did not think,
My chain of days was link by link
Unwoven quite : I did not shrink
From coming bitterness to drink.

I saw the little midges dart
Thro' shade and into sunlight start ;
The day's great stillness was my heart,
Of the sweet summer I was part.

And when the sun had fallen low
That place was all a wondrous glow,
Like trees of fire the pines arow,
Like a soft flame the air did flow.

I nothing knew at all but peace,
Faint sorrow that the day must cease,
Tho' when the red sun went, the breeze
Sighed softly with my greater ease.

The Circular Saw

Still on the fragrant earth I lay ;
I felt the little ants at play
Upon my hands ; but when the day
Was done, I dreaming came away.

THE CIRCULAR SAW

BECAUSE the high long dreary London wall
Vexed us, when we came to the open gate
Idly we turned aside, and suddenly stopped,
With eyes enchanted, with voices ready to call
One to the other for wonder : " Wait, O wait ! "
Deep in a covered alley the hot sun dropped,
Slant, fierce, and mellow, between high stacks
Of yellow timber sweet : an alley where
Brown-muscled men bore upon balks of pine
Urging them on to the saw, where they severed
like wax,
With a rising muffled scream, a triumphant blare,
Thrilling the throat and the bosom, and rich as
a wine
The scent of the spouting sawdust invaded the
place,

The Circular Saw

The soul of the magical forest, resinous, sweet,
Subtly invaded the desolate, sordid street.

But O the wonder! for all the o'ershadowed
space

Was quick with the floating dust, a haze there
grew,

A haze green-golden, full of the fire of the sun;
From a fountain of creamy fire that o'erbrimmed
it with gold

It gushed, in a lift of eddies, so shot through
With the further gloom that shadow and light
in one,

Like the-ghost of a glorious opal famous of old,
Like the deeps of a flickering ocean of sombre
green,

Curled and eddied, melted and licked and lapped,
Enwrapping the phantom workers, their faces
bright

In the liquid light so marvellously entrapped,
In the odorous whirling water imprisoned be-
tween

The resinous piles, a hive of fantastic light,
Dancing within itself and over the ground,
While ever the screaming, rending, blaring saw
spun round.

The Circular Saw

"The sea!" we cried, "the sea, deep under the
sea!"

(And beyond, at a shadowy wharf, a vessel there
lay

With spars aslant, like a wreck of an olden day;)
Not strange had it seemed if out of the further
gloom

A gentle, cumbersome beast had begun to loom
In air—nay, it was water—poised, pushing about
The flickering bottom with meditative snout,
Till he lit on the thing enchanted come down in
the sea,

The shrieking shapen bulk with the voice of a
storm,

The wrestling creatures possessed, of unpiscine
form,

And the flapping snapping belt, like a devilish
weed;

Till, gazing a moment, with wise and shallow
eyes,

His body shuddered, his great tail with speed
Swung, and he oared his lithe precipitate way
Back to the further gloom, in fluttered surprise,
To the kind accustomed regions of lesser day.
But we gazed on in amaze at a scene so fair,

The Laughter of Summer

Bathing our sense in the flood of the golden-green
Warm wavering colour, and said not it was air,
Till a patient horse drew a laden waggon
between,
Till, drunk with the wine of the forest, come
forth from the sea
To the thin and comfortless air of the city, we
Left the wide gate, and under the dreary wall
Passed thro' the clattering street where the
hawkers call.

THE LAUGHTER OF SUMMER

ALL day the pine-forest lay still
From hill to hidden hill.
Faintly under the sea-blue sky
The delicate meshes of black were pushed, put by,
By a breath of the outer air, too faint to sigh,
And the forest again lay still.
Only the stir of a bird on a brittle bough
Broke the warm silence, silent now

The Laughter of Summer

Till after the noon was high ;
Then, in the dreamless blue, the enlacéd sky,
Rose a white cloud in the west, and floated by,
Soft and full and pure and high,
With a milky haze behind
It wandered in a lofty wind.

Then, far away,
I heard a low-breathed sigh
Of many trees asway
Under the sky :
So, to a vale asleep,
When the hush of night is deep,
The sea that wakes alone
Softly doth moan.
Then over all the wood, above, around,
A slow mysterious sound
Spread thro' the air ;
About an ancient house
At night the wind may rouse
Such voices when the fire is red and boughs are
bare.

Then one by one
The trees that all the day

The Laughter of Summer

Were drowsy with the sun
Put sleep away ;
The pine I lay beneath
Shook all its rustling wreath
Of shadowy wealth above
As tho' by stealth,
And one by one the trees
Sighed as for perfect ease
Or perfect love.

So thro' the forest, one by one,
Under the prevalent summer sun
The trees awoke ;
Now near, now far away
A stately pine asway
The silence of the day
Joyfully broke ;
Until the distant breathing,
All the sky and earth enwreathing,
Surging thro' the forest drew,
Thro' the drowsy vistas nearer,
And the magic music clearer
Ever grew,
Till before the enraptured wave
All the lofty listeners gave,

The Laughter of Summer

And behind me and around me and above the
pæan flew.

Now the world was all in motion,
All the stately trunks asway,
Dancing with a grave devotion
To the rapture of the day,
All their tossing crowns above
Soft with laughter, glad with love;
All the rippling wood was dancing
And the seas of sunlight glancing
Hither, thither, on the ground,
And the music all entrancing
With a cool and hushing sound
Revelled thro' the awakened shadows, all the
velvet ways around.

Ah! said I, the hidden god
All the holy morning trod
In the brooding ways remote
Where the only song afloat
Was the song of the drowsy dove,
In the hot thick boughs above:
She was singing all alone,
All alone under the sky,

The Laughter of Summer

Because none other doth intone
Her song of peace alone ;
None other could sing and cross the prevalent
hour
With music of harsh delight or turbulent power ;
And he, the lord of the wood,
Beheld how all was good,
Throughout the velvet-silent russet ways
Full of rich odour, and splashed with lights
ablaze
Spilt on the floor moss-flowered, as fire on the
slender trees,
And over all an irresistible peace,
That said in its own heart, it ever had been
And never should cease ;
And yet in a sweetness of wonder beheld its
own heart,
As one who discovers the dawn with new-found
eyes
By love's lips kissed, in a hushed surprise ;
There did he tarry, there joy apart,
Until the peace of the morning, like wine in his
heart,
Forsook its own self as the flower forsaketh the
bud,

The Laughter of Summer

Brimmed over and thrilled for joy of the perfect
wood ;

Ah, joy too great to bear,
Too sweet, with none to share !

For then with a swift desire, sweet laughter into
the air

Himself he cast, O into the trees and the sky,
And into the cloud serene, meditative on high,
Into the proud shy hearts of the still ecstatic
trees,

Into that reverent and most delighted breeze,—
Ah ! and with what caress,

Out of the sea-blue sky,

Came he back to the thick hushed forest, with
the wind's feet,

And hovered a moment in quiet, and found all
sweet,

And, with a sigh,

Abandoned himself to the abandoning trees, and
searched the most secluded ways and shy !

Fawning, caressing, danced the abandoned trees,
And he in their hearts, and in the delighted
breeze,

For now the joy too sweet to bear

With none at all to share

The Rain

All the flickering forest knoweth, all the streaming
odorous air,
And his holy secret rapture
All things do share,
And lead a magic dance
Whom his laughter doth entrance,
It is chanted in a pæan through the enraptured
world around.
Ah, behold his lordly rapture
That his creatures do recapture,
That for love has taken to it earthly raiment,
caught, and found!

THE RAIN

ALL the green of the garden is chill,
All the grey of the sky is still,
And across the window, down to the lawn
The patient glittering rain is drawn,
Darkly falling all over the sky,
Falling, falling in shadowy threads,
White as it passes the poplars by
In glittering phantom threads,

The Rain

Straight and long it falls from on high,
On the flowers, on their forsaken heads ;
Plashing the moss-green tiles of the houses
With multitudinous cold grey fingers,
And ever rouses
That patient, weary song,
Which, all the morning long,
Continually drowsing like the sea,
Became its very song to me ;
The song that lingers
Through the dull afternoon, yet brings to me
No salt, no life, no savour of the sea.

The birds are hushed in the trees
That sang in the rain of dawn,
And all the sodden lawn
Lies empty, and the still wet leaves around
Mutter their charm of unremitting sound,
That, as the sullen sky
Droops like a net to hold a soul to ground,
So, with its patient and continual drone,
Weaves a dull spell to prison up the sense,
Till I can conjure me to call my own
No summer's rapture, April's innocence
Of memoried song ;

The Rain

But all a long life long,
So mutters the rain,
Plashing the leaves, crackling upon the pane,
I have sat at a window open high
Half on a garden, half on the sky ;
And the green garden one
That never heard a song or saw the sun,
And the grey sky
One that has never seen a cloud sail by.

What should I do without the wind ?
I, so weary all the day,
Grew, I think, half dazed of mind,
Yet did not wish the rain away ;
I did not murmur of the rain,
It seemed so vain
To think the eternal rain could cease
Its dreary, maddening peace ;
But as it plashed upon the mournful trees
There came a languid breeze,
Cold as the breath of deathly rain
It came, and died, and rose again :
And all the poplars nodded slowly, swinging
With a rhythmic, stately motion,
Slowly rocking, sternly singing,

White Fire

Strong with life and light with laughter, full of
clamour and commotion ;
So the awakening trees
Surged before the breeze,
Laughing through the strong embraces of the
wind that left the ocean.

WHITE FIRE

BY night as the moon went over the edge of
the earth

The slack sea-water out of the troubled sea
Entered the sombre valley ; the thrush's mirth
Rang over a mile of water clearly to me :
He was hidden deep in a dewy wood
On a mirrored hill o'erhanging the glossy flood.

The thrush gave over ; the grey of the sky
o'ercast

Grew utter night ; such night on the waters now
Scarce the inverted woods appeared in the flood ;
at last

The wind was risen, shaking from many a bough

White Fire

Down-dripping dew in music upon the night
Of flower and fern that dreamed of the summer
light.

Swiftly out of the east from a dip of the hill
Flowed the cool air of the starless heavens deep,
But yet the glassy face of the flood lay still,
The peace preserving of most equal sleep ;
Only a sudden ripple on the languid weed
Salt-smelling, hissed on the shore, and the ear
gave heed.

And the eye went blindly after the ear—and lo !
White fire in the flood ! the ripples of milky
flame

Whispered enchanted ashore in a holy glow,
Till the border of bubbling surf was a thing
without name,

A lace of stars blown by a magic wind,
A heaven too careless of splendour for life to
bind.

I trod on the wrack of the dim shore, salt and
sweet ;
At every step the utter dark of the beach

The Snow

In a silver galaxy blazed ; if under my feet,
Or far as the mind of a mortal never can reach,
The eye could say not : I dreamed that I was
a god,
And thousands of stars were born to die as I
trod.

THE SNOW

ALL the windless winter day
The plain lay still ;
I heard a horse a mile away
Cantering over a frozen hill.
Not a bird, not a beast was seen,
But only a ruffled crow,
Huddling his feathers or turning his head
Drowsily to and fro ;
The world was dead,
The heavens were grey,
And even the meadows were hardly green.

But lately arose a wind in icy flight ;
We thought it had carried away the sky at night

The Snow

To show us the dazzling moon :
But no ! idly it lifted the hoary straws
Hung on the hedges, and the frozen grass
And rank enriméd meadow-rushes felt it pass,
Whistling a fitful tune
With doleful pause ;
Until the wind, although the lofty sky
Went by, brought up a new grey sky
And this and that so high they seemed in their
 passage asleep,
Till, down the division deep,
The fluttering snow adventured, late in the after-
 noon.

All was grey as on we strode
The hard swift-echoing road,
Keeping a lusty pace ;
Then, when the light grew sullen, we felt the
 familiar brush,
Forgotten, softer than rain to the face,
And lo ! uplooking, the vault immense was
 a-flush
Where all had been grey, with a sickly yellowish
 glare,
Where, sailing downward, loosely sinking in air,

The Snow

Like a million feathers a-flutter, shadowy, slow,
Floated and fell in a down-insistent flight, the
snow.

And the wind having done what it listed, wandered away,

To be felt no more, neither heard ;
And a veil came falling over the failing day,
Dropping incessantly downward, unpierced, un-
stirred,

Like a myriad threads of ethereal wool enwound
Perpetually, from the heavens to the ground,
As though the meadows, out of the frozen cloud,
Were weaving a deathly shroud.

On by the whitening hedges
On the road that rang like metal
We strode, and heard in the sedges
The soft snow settle ;
Like a nation of icy ghosts of white moths flying
Brushing for ever our faces, flew in a steady fall
The slow soft-settling flakes more thickly lying,
And ere the fall of the night had covered all ;
All sound was over ; our quick steps were soft,
And thicker the flakes, unreeling the skies aloft,

The Snow

Gently whirling as they were falling, floating
down in a lazy swirl,
Till all the night was drift of white, all the world
a shower a-whirl.

With lashes blinking, with lips the snow-flakes
drinking,
Nothing we saw but the white downward-floating
night,
Seeming to strive through the earth to take its
flight,
With a steady soft commotion, in a maze or
downward motion,
As though in a phantom ocean were sinking,
sinking,
White flowers of winter's birth, blown over-sea
in a gust of mirth,
Strewn by a tempest far overhead, to drift down
in the water dead.
But, ere we knew it, a shadow on either side
Of high barns uplooming told of the village
nigh,
And quickly we reached the inn, and waited
outside
Lifting our brows to the full down-sailing sky.

The Snow

With faces the flakes refreshed as they thawed
aglow

We met the lonely downfall, whitely coating
Meadow and road and roof with its gentle float-
ing,

Gable and eave and thatch, railing, sill, and
latch,

With high imponderous ridges of fragile snow;
Loosely lying on every twig, till the slenderest
one was big,

And the blackest white, and the laurel-shrubs
Set by the door in their frozen tubs
Grow each like a snow-clad hill.

And lo! the night we thought so still
Is full of a whisper hushed, a word unsaid,
A greeting the snow has brought from the skies
of the dead.

Lightly floating on high, falling soft and loose,
Dark in the vault of the sky the flakes as they
slowly sail

Down to the ground, pale, as though their fate
to refuse:

But yet the insistent shower falls and falls,
On meadow, on road, on roof, on walls,

The Snow

Falls, floats, and falls ;
All through the air, all through the sky,
Below, on high, and everywhere
Now, and as here,
And every moment following as this ;
And each flake settles with a soft hushed hiss ;
The world is full of the rustle of falling snow.

Sée ! dáy fádeth as though the snow
Brought all the white of the heavens to lay it
low
And left the heavens dark.
Now all the ways are white ; the snow all night
Will fall perpetually, unhurried, light,
August, and in its icy solitude
Content, and leave no path unstrewed.
Come ! for the day is over, the windows glow
Through the unreeling downfall of the snow
Wound like a smoky web across—yet hark !
Hush ! on all roads, on meadow, on roof, on tree,
The secret whisper of the mystery.

Night in Autumn

NIGHT IN AUTUMN

THE wind has risen to-night ;
The trees above me roar ; I stand alone
In the seething darkness of the wood : no light
Shines from her room : inhuman the night has
grown,
A night of only blackness, rage, and death,
Whose voice, with desolate breath,
Laments along the woods, and from the sea
Complains incessantly.

O surging, baffled voice of the wind,
Be still, be still that I may call to her,
Still, as to hear the fall of an autumn leaf !
In silence breathed below the o'ershadowing
house
Her whispered name should rouse
No echo, but only her :
Be still, O voice of everlasting grief,
O voice of troubled earth and empty sky,
Be still, go by !

Be still, be still,
O, passing down the night

Night in Autumn

Let utter silence fall on wood and hill
Like sleep from love ; let all be silent quite,
That I, alone in this great solitude,
May verily know how good
Her nearness is ; she in her chamber high,
With happy sleep upon as gracious eyes,
Waked by the sudden quiet of the sky
Perchance would rise
To marvel at the silence of the night,
And hear the lone sea murmur out of sight.
Perchance then I would call to her, and she
Look down on me.

Wind, wind, if she loved me not,
I would bid you fill your song with bitter grief,
With melancholy cries of love forgot,
And shudder with despair by every tossing leaf ;
I would bid you from the limits of the sea
Gather your moan, and through the wailing land
Plunge like a wandering soul, lost and mad with
despair ;
I would bid you with your desolation cover me,
Surging up with terror upon every hand,
And with your clamour of tormented air
Drown my voice quite, lest in my agony

Night in Autumn

Its lamentable sound should madden me,
And I should sob among the driven leaves,
Among the driven leaves as lost as I ;
I would bid you sweep about her shadowy eaves,
Singing the loneliness of all the sky,
Singing to her the anguish of my passion
In what imperious fashion
She could not choose but understand, while I
Low in the leaves that whirl should lie,
My aching body stricken through with love.
Knowing my love and I to be no more
To her than the fall of the foam along the shore
Or the accustomed wind of the skies above.

O, but she loves me, loves me, triumphing wind !
Therefore break into her maiden sleep,
Then, to her amazed mind
You, filling all the ways of the heavens deep,
Shall sing to her for me !
Sweep from the verge of the heaving desolate sea,
Shout through the forest, exult along the sky,
And sing your song on high !
Go tell her how my blood in all my veins
Sings and exults, as through the o'erwhelméd
plains

The Wind

You masterfully rush : impetuous as your breath,
Ensured, irrevocable and fast as death,
Tell her my love is : O, vast voice of night,
Tell her my love is wild and swift as you,
Sweep on, my bidding do !
Possess her enraptured heart, O fill her with
ecstasy, tell
How I love, as none may utter but you, yêa,
wildly well
Sing, O song of ecstatic triumph, exulting delight !

THE WIND

O MOON-ENCHANTED night !
O night of the revelling wind, and the
laughing light
Flooding the ether, high and inviolate,
Behind whose mysteries reticent wait
Stars unseen for the wonder of the moon :
O swift imperious tune !
O wild incessant song, thrilling the surging trees,
With an echo rapt from the foam of enchanted
seas,

The Wind

Rejoice, O night, and silver moon, rejoice,
In the magical hours that endure while the sun
 is away,
When the earth wears a light eye never conceived
 by day,
And the wind has a stranger voice.

Vaguely, indefinitely green and gray
The spectral meadows roll away, away,
And heave as a glimmering sea under the windy
 sky.

Tossing, tossing on high
Shiver the trees, dancing and mad with joy,
Dancing, dancing to the song of the wind en-
 trancing
The heart of the night and my heart, my heart
 with joy!

Well sings the wind, O a song for leaping
 blood,
A song of the joy of life, and the splendour of
 love!

The brave wind shouts in the flickering ways of
 the wood,
He plashes with mad glad hands the boughs of
 the trees above,

The Wind

And high in the upper air
Sweeps through the heavens bare,
Flows, majestic, out of the western blue,
And riots in lands where the peace of the night
is new.

No peace is here to-night !
O away with peace, for this is a night of delight !
My soul is away with the revelling joy of the
wind,
The wind and I are one abandoned kind,
My heart is strange with the glamour of the
moon,
My heart is laughing like the foam of the sea,
That seethes to the wind, at one with its tune,
At one with the heart in me.

Shine, silver moon, blow, shouting wind,
Sweep, laughing flood, across the untroubled sky !
Lo, the woods heave, the summer leaves are
whirled
Like birds in terrible fright across the light
Of the icy moon, and the wind behind
Catches them, mingles them, hurls them on high !
Lo, how the leaves are whirled !

The Wind

Whirl my old years away, O enraptured wind!
Let them be clean forgotten, blown out of mind!
Then shall I hear you sing:

“Awake, O mortal, awake to the magical earth,
Awake, O harp, to the hands of the laughing
wind,

O, a proud life is before you! the infinite skies,
The seas and the sun and the earth to delight
your eyes,

And I to sing to your heart,
Till you go to the darkness who came of the
darkness at birth

With a song of its peace in your heart:
Yea, as a harp in the hands of the harper cries,
Sing ye for joy under my laughing skies.”

O swift imperious song! my uplifted heart
Sings, and whom shall I sing to, indifferent wind?
Not now to you, singing your infinite song!
Go, mighty wind, and call to her I love,
Call her out in the rioting, moon-enchanted night,
Sing to her, stoop to her, sweeping wildly above:
O, set her heart a-dancing like the shivering light
of delight

Shaken on the tresses of the singing trees—

The Wind

Have you beheld her, have you caressed her,
O wind ?

Her heart is deep as your own, O sing to her
heart !

Moon, do you shine on her ; moon, do you see
her face ?

Kiss her eyes, kiss her lips, for they have your
magical grace,

And breathe through the tangle of her fallen
hair, O wind,

And set her feet a-dancing, and the sweet blood
of her heart !

Bring her to me, O call her hither, wind of the
west !

Charm her to me with a charm, O moon of the
sky !

Set her white spirit laughing with this your
mystical laughter,

O, set her singing, that I may follow after

When I hear her voice in the voice of the wind
caressed,

Rapt and caressed as he riots the woodlands by :

Bring her to me with laughter on her mouth,

Bring her to me with laughter in her eyes,

The Wind

And a light on her face from the magical moon
in the south,
And caught in her hair the coolness of all the
skies :
Bring her to me with fallen hair afloat
Over her singing throat.

Lo, in the heaving boughs the moon, a silver
fiery tear,
Sweeps and flashes and rocks as I run by ways
that rustle and shake,
And a sound of enraptured weeping and of tear-
ful laughter make :
Call hither the girl I love, O west wind, bring her
here !
Whirl her old years away, O majestic wind,
Let them be all forgotten, blown out of mind !
Sing then, wind, imperious, laughing, sweet and
strong,
Sing then, wind, and this shall be your song :
“Awake, O lovers, awake, awake to the magical
night !
Awake, O harps, to my fingers of delight !
O, a proud life is before you ; the infinite skies,

The Wind

The sun and the hills and the seas to delight
your eyes,
As you wander, wander through the immortal
earth
To the silence of infinite sleep from the silence
of birth,
With the ancient joy of the ancient earth for
your part,
O driven leaves of the wind, be glad, be merry
at heart ! ”

FINIS



